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# HINDUISM

AND ITS

RELATIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

BY THE

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ABERDEEN

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## P R E F A C E.

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‘THIS book is offered to those who take an interest in India, and especially in Indian missions, as an attempt to enable them better to understand the religion of the great majority of the people of that land. I have found prevalent in this country ideas of Hinduism very different from those which a twelve years’ practical study of it in constant contact with its followers has led me to form. Generally, among friends of missions, there is an undue depreciation of Hinduism—an ignoring or an ignorance of the amount of truth and vitality still to be found in it; whilst, among those indifferent or hostile to missions, there is an equal ignoring or ignorance of the falsehood which vitiates that truth and poisons that vitality. Not only does Hinduism contain a subtle philosophy, express high moral truths, and enjoin many social virtues; it even in one guise or other embodies many of the leading religious truths which Christianity teaches. But that there is in it an ineradicable vice which neutralises all that is good, which has paralysed, and must paralyse, all those efforts at reform within Hinduism that more enlightened Hindus have made and are now making, and which leaves Christianity the only hope for India—is what I have endeavoured to show.

hold its own, anticipated twenty years ago, is therefore not surprising. There is danger, however, of the mistake being made of attributing its failure to internal dissensions, whereas it was inherent in the character of the movement from the beginning.

On the other hand, the rise of the Arya Samaj has introduced an element into the religious situation which was hardly even suspected twenty years ago. That movement has attracted much less notice in this country, and has met with much less sympathy than the Brahma Samaj. The cause of this is not far to seek. The Brahma Samaj was a product of European rather than of Hindu thought, and was welcomed as such by the leaders of thought in this country. The Arya Samaj is an entirely Indian movement; and, while obliged to reckon with European science and civilisation, it scorns European thought, philosophy, and especially religion. It is the latest effort at reform which has sprung from the midst of Hinduism itself. Its founder, Dayanand Saraswati, was a purely Hindu reformer, of the same type as many who have sought to reform Hinduism previously, with this difference, that he found himself confronted by European civilisation and the advance of the Christian religion, which he looked on as opposed to Vedic religion as much as were the corruptions of Hinduism. There are indications of his followers coming to take the position of another Hindu sect, with the name of Dayanandis. Meanwhile it has secured a far firmer hold on the native mind than the Brahma Samaj ever did, and will be a much more serious element in the religious struggle in India.

Amid all this, Christianity, especially the Protestant Church, has been making steady progress. The increase of the whole Christian community during the last twenty years has been 50 per cent., while the increase of the Protestant portion has been about 150 per cent., a result which bears witness to the vigour with which Protestant missions have been prosecuted. At the same time, it must be noted that the greater part of this increase was during the first decade, the progress during the second being both relatively and absolutely smaller. This may be partly owing to the more active attitude of Hinduism, but it is also to be feared that some methods of evangelisation have been introduced the results of which are not so permanent as some of the older methods. The situation is one requiring the earnest consideration of those who are leading the missionary enterprise in India. The emergence of these questions has led to the last three chapters of the book being entirely rewritten.

While, in the contact between the West and the East, European thought has been affecting that of India, Indian thought has also been affecting that of Europe and America. The most remarkable outcome of this is the Theosophical Society. Theosophy claims to be an old form of religious thought, and to be akin, not only with Vedism and Buddhism, but also with the esoteric teaching of older religions. It has made some attempts to establish itself in India as a cult, amid the unsettlement of religious thought there, as the worship of Isis sought to establish itself in Italy in the unsettlement of religious thought there in the first century. And between some of

the methods used to commend modern Theosophy to the people of India, and some of the methods used to commend the worship of Isis to the people of Italy, as revealed by the discoveries at Pompeii, there is sufficient resemblance to give the modern system a claim to be regarded as the heir of the earlier one. But, putting aside its quasi magical sanctions and alleged communications from those sublimated human beings called Mahatmas, the Theosophists claim that their system can stand on its own merits. And in it there are two main doctrines, that of Metempsychosis, or, as they prefer to term it, Re-incarnation, with its associated doctrine of Karma; and that of Universal Brotherhood. The latter is a Christian doctrine, which we all admit. The former is the Indian doctrine, vehemently diluted indeed with the sentimentalism of the nineteenth century, but practically the same. We have thus a system which seeks to promote efforts after perfection, and recognition of universal brotherhood, by a doctrine the practical outcome of which has been to paralyse all sense of responsibility and annihilate all faith in human brotherhood. In the following pages the reader may trace the development and practical effects of some of those dogmas which are now being commended as the remedy for the evils of the nineteenth century, and the solution of its religious and philosophic difficulties.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**A**N Englishman, entering for the first time a native town in India, will probably not proceed far without having his attention drawn to an open shrine, containing a rudely carved stone, worshipped with rites as senseless as their object is shapeless. Let him ask one of the worshippers a 'reason of the faith that is in him,' and he will as probably be taken aback with a subtle reply, revealing a system of thought entirely distinct from his, depending on other bases and proceeding by other methods, and the fallacy of which he cannot at the moment seize. Further experience will show him that the reply he has received is a stock reply, the fruit of the thinking of the nation rather than of the individual; but the first impression produced will be one of bewilderment, perplexing his reason, and throwing him back on his instincts for evidence of the truth.

A similar bewilderment, I fancy, must be produced on many when they read accounts of the religion of the Hindus by persons who have had opportunities of observing it from different points of view. Some speak of it as the grossest of

superstitions; others, as the deepest and subtlest of speculations. Macaulay, who had to do with the Hindus as a legislator, can hardly find words strong enough to denounce their faith. 'In no part of the world,' he says, 'has a religion ever existed more unfavourable to the moral and intellectual health of our race. The Brahmanical mythology is so absurd that it necessarily debases every mind which receives it as truth. And with this absurd mythology is bound up an absurd system of physics, an absurd geography, an absurd astronomy. Nor is this form of Paganism more favourable to art than to religion. Through the whole of the Hindu Pantheon you will look in vain for anything resembling those beautiful and majestic forms which stood in the shrines of ancient Greece. All is hideous and grotesque and ignoble. As this superstition is of all superstitions the most irrational and of all superstitions the most inelegant, so is it of all superstitions the most immoral. Emblems of vice are objects of public worship. Acts of vice are acts of public worship. The courtesans are as much a part of the establishment of the temple, as much ministers of the god, as the priests. Crimes against life, crimes against property, are not only permitted but enjoined by this odious theology. But for our interference human victims would still be offered to the Ganges, and the widow would still be laid on the pile by the corpse of her husband, and be burned alive by her own children.'<sup>1</sup>

Compare this testimony with that of another,

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<sup>1</sup> Speech on the Gates of Somnauth.



who had to deal with the Hindus as a scholar and a philosopher, and who declares Hindu philosophy to be 'a calm, clear, collected exposition of principles, which Germany constantly and England occasionally gropes after, without ever grasping them with any such grasp as that with which India has taken hold on them.'<sup>1</sup> This is the language not of an opponent of Christianity but of an advocate, taken from a book designed to lead Hindu pundits to a careful study of its truths. It is, moreover, on the whole a fair statement of the case. Hindu philosophers live in a world of thought such as Europeans can form little idea of. The practical and real questions that are ever present to the mind of the German, and still more of the Englishman, leading them to tread with doubt and hesitation, if not with humility, never trouble the Hindu metaphysician at all. He moves in the region of pure thought, unimpeded by the contradictions which retard the course of his Western brethren, on to the goal of a transcendental abstraction from which the most daring of them would shrink.

But man is not all thought; he has an outward life which he must lead, actual relations which he must fulfil, yearnings and aspirations of the soul which he must satisfy. The real value of a system is found when it comes to deal practically with these questions, and the practical result of Hindu philosophy in dealing with them is that hideous picture which Macaulay has drawn, not one trait of which is too dark, but of which he saw only the

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<sup>1</sup> Ballantyne's *Bible for the Pundits*.

outer form without noting the subtle soul of Pantheism that pervades it, justifying its grossest excesses and wildest extravagances. It is this union of a subtle Pantheistic philosophy with a gross popular idolatry that constitutes modern Hinduism, and makes it the most redoubtable foe with which Christianity has to contend in India if not in the world.

Looking at this system as it now exists, examining the books that are current among the people, conversing with them and debating with their teachers, we can form some idea of the bases of thought on which it now rests and of the hold which it has on the Hindu mind. But the question irresistibly occurs, How did men come to believe in such a system? Can there possibly be any kinship between it and the faith which we profess? Are there common principles in our nature to which both alike appeal? Hinduism as it now is was not always the religion of India, and, indeed, in its present form it is of comparatively modern date. Just as in looking at the rocks of the Jura or the red sandstone of Cromarty, and studying the fossils imbedded therein, we feel sure that we are looking on the vestiges of a former world; so, in studying modern Hinduism, we feel that we have the fossilised remains of former faiths gathered into new combinations and welded together by a new power. But as to the real history of the changes that have taken place we are still comparatively in the dark. The student of Hinduism has indeed more to guide him than the student of geology, but after all that

has been done much is still uncertain, much is left to conjecture.

Yet the main features of the past religious history of India have been determined with sufficient accuracy for practical purposes, and modern Hinduism can be best understood by looking first of all at those religions which preceded it. I will, therefore, begin by giving a short sketch of the earlier religions of India, then try to present the main features of Hinduism as it now is, give a short review of its conflict with Mohammedanism, and conclude with a more detailed examination of its present conflict with Christianity.

## PART I.—EARLIER RELIGIONS OF INDIA.



### CHAPTER I.

#### EARLIEST VEDIC RELIGION.

THE earliest records we have of the Hindu religion, as of the Hindu race, are certain old hymns now known in their collected form as the RIG VEDA. Of these the oldest are certainly not later than twelve hundred years before Christ, or more than three thousand years from the present date. They are important not only for the light which they cast on the early history of India, but also for that which they cast on the early history of mankind, and especially of that family to which English and Hindus alike belong, called from the word used in these hymns, the ARYAS.<sup>1</sup> The language in which they are written supplied the key to the relationship of the various languages spoken from Caithness to Cape Comorin, showing that they were originally one, and the peoples that speak them originally one tribe—that the Hindus are our brethren not merely as being members of the same human race, but as members of the same family of that race—that our common forefathers at one time

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<sup>1</sup> *Arya* is the exact transliteration of the Sanskrit word. Some authors write it *Aryan* or *Arian*, which is apt to perplex the ordinary English reader. In the sequel I use *Arya* as the noun, and *Aryan* as the adjective.

dwelt together in the highlands of Central Asia ; but the progenitors of the Hindus, after seeing their brethren go in successive emigrations westward to overrun and occupy Europe, by some unknown impulse turned south towards the sunny plains of India.

At the time these hymns were written the Aryas had advanced only as far as the Punjab and the banks of the Indus. They had but recently emigrated from a colder clime, for they reckoned their age by the number of their winters ; and they still retained the fair complexion of their northern source. Their chief wealth seems to have consisted in flocks and herds, but they also practised agriculture largely. They had made considerable progress in the arts ; they had built cities, and they traded in ships. Besides husbandmen and herdsmen, priests, warriors, and merchants existed among them, but merely as professions, and not in any sense like the castes of modern India. Neither had they any particular rules about food : they even ate the flesh of the cow—now the unpardonable sin of Hinduism—and praised it as the best of food. We can indeed trace among them scarcely any correspondence with the habits and customs of the Hindus as we now know them. But besides these Aryas there were also the *DASYUS*, of whom we learn little, but that they were dark in complexion and constantly at war with the Aryas ; they had also built cities and made some progress in civilisation. Who they were I do not mean now to discuss.<sup>1</sup> The word means natives

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<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt, however, that they belong to the Turanian race, and had probably immigrated into India before the Aryas.

or nations. They were the inhabitants of India when the Aryas entered it, and bore to them much the same relation as the Gentiles did to the Jews or the Barbarians to the Greeks. It is well, however, to bear distinctly in mind that the first glimpse we get of India three thousand years ago reveals the ancestors of the present Brahmans, Rajputs, and high castes of India, living—a fair-complexioned race—in the north-west corner of the Peninsula, whither they had descended from the cool heights of the Himalayas, and all the rest of the Peninsula occupied by a darker and more savage race, the ancestors probably of the hill tribes and low castes, called by the Aryan conquerors then, as they are called by the English conquerors now, Dasyus—natives.

On turning to the RELIGIOUS BELIEFS expressed in these hymns we get glimpses of a comparatively pure faith, but in the very earliest already draped in error, which in the later ones becomes grosser and more complete. It is possible that originally the various tribes of the Aryan race, ere they separated from each other, worshipped the one God. But the proof for this is anterior to literature, and is derived entirely from philology. By the time the earliest Sanskrit hymns were written, we find physiolatry, or nature-worship, asserting itself. The Aryas seem to have sought to realise the presence of God by naming Him after some of the noblest of His visible works. The hymns of the Vedas are addressed to various deities, whose names also express some of the phenomena of nature, or may

be traced to them. But while this is the case, there is also evidence in the language that the worshipper originally looked 'from nature up to nature's God,' and sought to worship the Creator by the name of His works.

It was a fine sentiment which led the Hebrew priests of old to omit the name of Jehovah in public worship, and substitute for it 'the incommunicable,' or some such expression; for human language can never give a *name* to the Supreme. All that we have been able to do has been to take some attribute, and ascribe to it the other attributes of Deity. This will be found to be the case with nearly all the names which we employ, whether God—the good, Jehovah—the existent, the Eternal, the Lord, the Almighty, or the Supreme. All these are names which our moral consciousness testifies to us must be applicable to God; each describes only a part of His nature, but we think of it as comprehending the whole. This difficulty, which we have got over by taking an attribute for the possessor of that attribute, the old Aryas got over by taking the work for the Maker—creation or part of creation for the Creator. These are the two currents of religious thought which seem to have divided mankind when left to their own efforts to feel after and express God—the one looking at Him as concealed in the sanctuary of the human heart, the other as concealed behind the veil of nature. The former tendency was most clearly exemplified among the Hebrews, the latter among the Greeks and the Aryas of India.

The visible object which most naturally calls out

man's thoughts to a being above him is the sky or heaven, which in all languages is used also to designate the abode of the Supreme. But the Aryas went a step further and designated God from His abode. This seems to have been done before the various branches broke off from one another, before the Greeks went towards Greece or the Latins towards Italy; for the Greek *Zeus*, the Latin *Jupiter*, possibly our word *divine*, are explained by the Sanskrit root *dyu*, forming the noun *DYAUS*, genitive *divas*. This is the name of one of the gods, possibly originally one of the names of the one God, but in Sanskrit it retains also its primitive meaning, which it has lost in all the other languages, namely, 'the sky or heaven.' By the time the earliest hymns were composed, he was conceived of as a distinct god, and the husband of *PRITHIVI*, the earth—heaven and earth being spoken of in them as the parents of all things.

But there is one aspect of the heavens which more powerfully and immediately evokes devout feelings, and that is the appearance they present by night. Of such sentiments the eighth Psalm is a well-known example, and to them the Vedas owe some of their finest poetry, and the highest conception of God which is to be found in the first stage of Vedic religion. The original name of this aspect of the heavens seems to have been *VARUNA*.<sup>1</sup> By the time the Vedic hymns were written the

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<sup>1</sup> The same as the Greek *ouranos*; from a root meaning to cover. In the Vedas Varuna, as the god of night, is associated with Mitra, the god of the day. In later Hindu mythology he is the regent of the waters.



meaning of the word as an appearance of nature had been entirely lost. It never occurs in them as a name of the sky, only as the name of a god ; but in the hymns addressed to him we can trace the sentiment still ruling, which the gaze on the nightly heavens is calculated to rouse in the soul. The thousand stars have become in them the thousand eyes of the god, searching out all that passes on earth, from which even darkness cannot hide. The feelings of awe, sinfulness, and contrition remain in them, and make them liker the Hebrew Psalms than anything else in profane poetry. Here is one that irresistibly recalls the 139th Psalm. I give it in Dr. Muir's spirited metrical translation, which will bring the resemblance more vividly before English readers :—

‘The mighty Lord on high our deeds, as if at hand, espies :  
The Gods know all men do, though men would fain their  
deeds disguise.

Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place to  
place,

Or hides him in his secret cell—the Gods his movements  
trace.

Wherever two together plot and deem they are alone,  
King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are  
known.

The earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless  
skies ;

Both seas<sup>1</sup> within him rest, and yet in that small pool He lies.  
Whoever far beyond the skies should think his way to wing,  
He would not there elude the grasp of Varuna, the King.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The waters above the firmament, and the waters under the firmament. See Gen. i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Atharva V. iv. 16, *Sanskrit Texts*, v. p. 64.

In the following hymn we find the sentiment of guilt and the need of mercy more strongly expressed :—

‘1. Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter the house of clay ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !

‘2. If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !

‘3. Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !

‘4. Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy !

‘5. Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host ; whenever we break thy law through forgetfulness ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.’<sup>1</sup>

The language of this hymn scarcely grates on the Christian sense, and if by Varuna we understand Him who dwells in heaven, little fault can be found with its theology. The same god is elsewhere addressed as ‘Lord of All, of heaven and earth.’ In the following verse, addressed also to him, we find the sentiment of the Hebrew Psalmist, ‘My soul thirsteth for Thee,’ expressed by an external pastoral image :—

‘Yearning for him, the far-seeing, my thoughts move onward as kine move to their pastures.’<sup>2</sup>

In the following prayer for forgiveness we find the germ of the tendency, now universal in India, to attribute sin to fate, contrasting strongly with the

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<sup>1</sup> R. V. vii. 89. Trans. Max Müller's *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. vii. 86. *Ibid*.

feeling of responsibility and guilt expressed in the Hebrew Psalms:—

‘Absolve us from the sins of our fathers and from those which we committed with our own bodies.

‘It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was necessity, an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is near to mislead the young: even sleep brings unrighteousness.’<sup>1</sup>

These extracts present us with some of the highest religious ideas we find in the Vedas; and as they are the highest so they are, according to all probability, the earliest. We cannot say that they express the very earliest religious ideas of the race. On the contrary, these hymns have all the appearance of being the product rather of a religious revival bringing fresh stimulus to the faith of the nation. We must take them for what they are, and give their testimony to the early faith of the Aryas its true value.

The religious basis of these poems is certainly not pure monotheism. But do they exhibit traces of antecedent monotheism? Now, monotheism in the modern sense of the word can scarcely be supposed to have existed as a primitive religious conception; it could come into existence only in opposition to polytheism and pantheism. We seem to have here an illustration of Hegel’s law of thought—from the positive to the negative and then to the absolute. Monotheism is the absolute of religious thought. Polytheism is the negative, in opposition to which it defines itself. But what is the positive? Max Müller has given to this the

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<sup>1</sup> R. V. vii. 86.

name of Henotheism, or One God only being present to the mind of the worshipper. This may practically be defined as worshipping God as the only God with whom the worshipper has to do. It is manifest that this can become absolute monotheism only when the question has been raised whether there are any other gods. The worshipper sees others worshipping God, and hears Him called by other names: are these the same or different? According to the answer given will monotheism affirm itself or polytheism take its place, and be impelled by the need for unity into pantheism.

The beginning of the struggle between these two tendencies marks the stage of religious thought expressed in the Vedic poems. Many gods are worshipped, but there is an endeavour to look on them all as one. We see this in the hymn to Varuna which I have quoted; he is there spoken of as equivalent to the gods.

The later hymns of the Vedas show great deterioration; and the source of this deterioration is evident. It is the tendency to express God by His works. While the Hebrews, following the evidence of their moral consciousness, preserved the idea of the spirituality of God, till the hope of their nation—the ‘Word made flesh’—presented to the world what it had vainly been feeling after, the Aryas, following their observation of God’s works, soon clothed their idea of Him with a material garb, which gravitated ever more rapidly to its earthly centre. They lost sight of the Creator and wor-

shipped the creature, whether the phenomena of nature or the heroes of their nation. It is only in the very earliest hymns that we get a glimpse of the soul of nature-worship. In the later ones it is the mere body, and these form by far the largest part of the Vedas. To judge of these books by the extracts I have given would lead to a far higher estimate of their general character than they deserve. We are constantly met with lower ideas, the material mastering the spiritual.

After the Ayras had entered the plains, and seen how by the blessing of the rain they were changed from dry sandy wastes to verdant pastures, that aspect of nature came to be of more importance to them, and was symbolised as INDRA, whose worship superseded that of Varuna. He is the favourite god of the Vedas, though a later conception than those already named. He had from the beginning a more material character than the others; his birth is spoken of, and in general the progress of anthropomorphism is visible. This is not to be wondered at. Even to persons less under the influence of natural phenomena than the Vedic bards, the approach of the monsoon sweeping over the plains, the piled clouds moving up in sharp distinction against the clear blue sky, with the lightning flashing beneath and the thunder rolling, readily suggests the idea of a king leading his hosts to battle.

After Indra, AGNI, the god of fire—manifested in the firmament as the sun, in the air as lightning, and on the altar as fire—was most revered, and he was especially the god of sacrifice. So too VAYU,

the wind, SURYA, the sun, and other objects of nature, were addressed as gods; and as conceptions of the Deity became more gross, a census of the gods, numbering thirty-three,<sup>1</sup> was taken.

In the midst of all this, however, we find a marked difference between Indian and Greek mythology. In the latter the places and relations of the various gods are distinctly arranged; in the former the henotheistic sentiment I have referred to of there being one God, who alone should be worshipped, made the worshippers of each god exalt him as such. In most of the hymns, the god who is addressed is spoken of as though he alone existed, and as though the writer was not conscious of any other. Sometimes he is expressly identified with others. 'Whatever we offer in repeated and plentiful oblations to any other deity is assuredly offered to thee (Agni).'<sup>2</sup> This is in some hymns carried so far as to present the germs of pantheism—another characteristic of modern Hinduism. In a hymn to ADITI<sup>3</sup> we find the following: 'Aditi is the sky (Dyaus); Aditi is the air; Aditi is the mother, and father, and son; Aditi is the collective gods; Aditi is the five persons;<sup>4</sup> Aditi is whatever has been born; Aditi is whatever is to be born.' But, again,

<sup>1</sup> In modern Hinduism this has swelled to thirty-three crores, or 330,000,000.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. 1, 2, 3, 6.

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of this word is properly the Infinite, though the aspect of the dawn opening up the gates of the infinite seems to have suggested it as the name of a goddess. The sun is called Aditya, or son of Aditi.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly the modern Panchāyat, or court of five arbitrators.

several gods are occasionally addressed in one hymn; and later, as the conceptions become grosser, jealousies and quarrels take place among them. These are characteristics of the religion of India to the present day.

But alongside of this there was also a struggling after an expression of the conception of the one God. While a daily deteriorating polytheism satisfied the majority, some more thoughtful minds recoiled from it, and, unable to find satisfaction elsewhere, looked to the unknown God. The following hymn is perhaps the most striking expression of this yearning of the mind to be found in any literature:—

‘Then there was neither Aught nor Nought, no air nor sky  
beyond.

What covered all? Where rested all? In watery gulf profound?

Nor death was then, nor deathlessness, nor change of night  
and day,

That One breathed calmly, self-sustained; nought else  
beyond It lay.

Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view,

That One, a void in chaos wrapt, by inward fervour grew.

Within It first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,

Which Nothing with Existence links, as sages searching find.

The kindling ray that shot across the dark and drear abyss,

Was it beneath? or high aloft? What bard can answer this?

There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces  
strove,—

A self-supporting mass beneath and energy above.

Who knows, who ever told from whence this vast creation rose?

No gods had then been born—who then can e’er the truth  
disclose?

Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or no,—  
Its Lord in heaven alone can tell, if even He can show.’<sup>1</sup>

In this hymn we find the theistic idea still struggling to express itself, but nearly crushed by a sense of the mystery of creation, and seemingly ready to yield to the pantheism that was already asserting itself in Aryan thought.

Turning from the gods to the WORSHIP paid them, the following passage may be taken :—

‘We deprecate thy wrath with *prostrations*, with *sacrifice*, and with *oblations*; averter of misfortune, wise and illustrious, be present amongst us, and mitigate the evils we have committed.

‘Varuna, loose for me the upper, the middle, the lower band (of sin); so, son of Aditi, shall we, through faultlessness in thy worship, become freed from sin.’<sup>2</sup>

These verses show the kind of worship paid and its purpose. The object of the worshipper was to be freed from sin and to avert the wrath of God consequent thereon. For this purpose hymns were chanted, prostrations performed, and flowers and clarified butter offered in oblation; but the chief means to this end was the sacrifice, which was of four kinds—the goat, the cow, the horse, and man. This last is the most savage feature in early Aryan worship, but it is one which we find in almost all ancient religions. The sacrifice of the horse seems to have been considered the most important,<sup>3</sup> and is

<sup>1</sup> R. V. x. 129. Trans. by Dr. Muir in *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson’s *Rig Veda*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> In some respects it was also the most revolting. The Yajur Veda, in which we have the details of the ceremony, was perhaps compiled later than this period; but it seems to show that the



one rite which links the Aryas with northern tribes. As to *how* sacrifice delivered the sacrificer from sin we find no attempt at explanation till a later period; and I therefore defer further consideration of it.

Of a FUTURE LIFE the Aryas seem at first to have had no idea. Immortality seems afterwards to have been looked on as a gift that might be granted by the gods, but not an inherent property of man's nature. The good and virtuous man might attain to it, while annihilation awaited the

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ancient religion of India, like the modern, combined high conceptions of God with very loathsome conceptions and very loathsome worship. The following incident will show its character and some consequences that have recently resulted from it:—‘In the October number of the *Indian Evangelical Review* the Rev. T. Williams, of Rewari, exposes the abominable character of the Yajur Veda. Three years ago, Mr. Williams in his annual report attacked the character of this Veda, and declared that Dayananda Saraswati, the first leader of the Arya Somaj, had deliberately falsified his translation of it, so as to gloss over its obscenity. Since that time a controversy has raged over it between the orthodox party, which objected to his translation, and the Aryas, who maintained it. As the question was largely one as to the truthfulness of the great commentator, Mahidhara, the Aryas translated his commentary into Urdu, and published it in the Nagri and Urdu characters. Thereupon the Hindus, under the impression that the translation was a forgery, directed the attention of the police to the book. The police took it up, and prosecuted the authors, printers, and publishers for publishing obscene literature. The charge of obscenity was proved, and heavy fines, which have been reduced on appeal, were passed upon six members of the Arya Somaj. We wonder how the average Hindu will regard this prosecution and its result. A perfectly true commentary on the Veda is pronounced obscene! But the Veda is believed by him to be the very word of God, perfectly pure, wise, and eternal! One result of this prosecution will be that the Christian Bible will be left in its vernacular translations without a rival as a religious and moral guide.’—*Indian Standard*, December 1891.

sinner.<sup>1</sup> Future blessings they did not desire. The boons they asked of their gods were temporal gifts, abundance of cattle, increase of children, life to a good old age, freedom from pain, triumphing over their enemies. They seem, from their hymns, to have been a vigorous, hearty race, enjoying life, and living and acting only for the present.

In all this we find but little resemblance to modern Hinduism, and though religious development will account for much, it will not account for all the change. But we must remember that this was the creed of the inhabitants of only a small corner of Hindustan. From the Sutlej to Cape Comorin were spread the Dasyus, tribes and nations of an alien race and alien religion, of which the Vedas take no account, but which has probably helped to mould Hinduism as much as the purer faith of the Aryas. Of the primitive religion of these tribes we have now no literary remains, the Tamil and Telugu literature having grown up since these nations were Brahmanised. But, judging from ruined monuments and from tradition, from the elements which we see conserved in Hinduism, and from the present state of many aboriginal tribes, we may conclude that fetichism and devil-worship prevailed among the ruder tribes, and 'tree and serpent' and phallic worship among the more advanced. The whole of India was thus before the Aryas, a vast field for conquest and colonisation, and for civilising with their higher social and

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<sup>1</sup> See Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v. pp. 284, ff.

religious culture. How they fulfilled this mission we shall shortly see.

But before tracing further the religious development of these Aryas, let us turn for a moment to another migration, which had probably taken place even earlier than theirs to India—a migration of much smaller dimensions, of which we have much fewer records, but which has exercised a far wider influence on the history of the world—the migration of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Palestine. We have only a brief historical account of it; we have no account of the creed of the patriarch and his followers, only a few indications as to what they believed. We have none of their hymns, if they had any; and we know nothing of what philosophic views they held. But we find one religious element which is wholly wanting in the Vedas—a consciousness of the presence and guidance of God. In the Vedas we see man seeking after God if haply he might find Him; in Abraham we see God seeking man. In the former the want of the human heart is expressed; in the latter the divine response appears. After centuries have passed, we find in the developments of these two religions in the present day the same features, more strongly marked than ever.

## CHAPTER II.

### BRAHMANISM.

LET us now pass over a period of six hundred years to the time preceding the first great religious movement in India, which shook not only it, but all Asia to its utmost extremities. The Aryas have pushed forward their conquests as far as the Nerbudda, and have even effected settlements beyond it. Changes have come alike over their social system and their religion: Caste rules with its iron sway; a degraded polytheism and a rigid sacerdotalism have been developed from the original faith.

The origin of CASTE must be looked for in the relation of the Aryas to the conquered nations. Of these the most important was the SUDRAS—possibly the *Hudrakoi* of Herodotus. As in Europe, from numbers of the Sclavonic race being reduced to servitude, the name *esclave* or *slave* came to be applied to all bondmen, so in India the name Sudra came to be applied to all the conquered tribes. We know what a difference exists in any society between master and bondmen, especially when the latter are of a different race or of a different colour; and race and colour are the mean-

ings of the two words which in Sanskrit and Hindi stand for caste.<sup>1</sup> The generation has not yet passed away that has seen in America how low and degraded the condition of a subject race may become, even when modified by the presence of the Christian religion — how the words of the Bible may be twisted into supporting iniquities utterly opposed to its spirit; and we may imagine how vast the distinction between the rulers and the ruled would become, when a plastic religion lent itself to be moulded in the hands of the former to confirm their claims. The position assigned to the slaves by the laws of the Southern States of America was noble compared with that assigned to the Sudras by the old code of Manu. No Southern planter ever dreamt of refusing to allow the negroes to be baptized; but in India, while the lordly Aryas were the *twice-born*, the Sudras were only the *once-born*. They could assume no sacred thread, the symbol of the second birth, admitting them to the privileges and hopes of religion, and they were menaced with death if they dared to engage

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<sup>1</sup> Caste is not an Indian word. Its original form, *casta*, belongs to the Portuguese, by whom it was originally used among themselves to express 'cast,' 'mould,' 'race,' 'kind,' 'quality.' It was applied by them, when they first arrived in the East, to designate the peculiar system of religious and social distinctions which they observed among the Hindu people, particularly as founded on race. The Indian word which partially corresponds with caste is *jāti*, 'race' or 'nation.' *Varna*, another word used for it, originally meant colour. Gradually these Indian words, conveniently rendered by *caste*, have come to represent not only varieties of race and colour, but every original, hereditary, religious, instituted, and conventional distinction which it is possible to imagine. See *Indian Caste*, by Dr. Wilson.

in any of the acts of worship allowed to their superiors.

But this tyranny of race could not exist without reacting on the twice-born themselves. We know in America what a gap there was in slave-holding times between the slave-owners and the poor whites, and so, too, class distinctions sprang up among the Aryas, though on quite different principles, and with much more inexorable rules. The language of the old hymns had become obsolete, and was known only to a class of men who had made it their business to study it, and who thus held the key to all religious service. These were the worshipping or praying ones, the BRĀHMANS, who had come to be looked on as demi-gods, the highest of castes, safe in unapproachable sanctity. It was the greatest of all crimes to put them to death, and therefore, of whatever crime they might be guilty, the utmost the king could do was to banish them from his kingdom. The KSHATRIYAS, or warriors, imitated their religious teachers, and claimed privileges which the priests, who depended on them for protection, readily granted. They formed the second caste, with a position but little inferior to the Brahmanas, while under them the VAISYAS, merchants and farmers, formed the third caste. These were the three castes of the twice-born, while the whole of the Sudras, or once-born, were slumped together as the fourth caste.

The following is the account given in the Institutes of MANU, the great Indian legislator, to account for this division. Though the book was

compiled later, it expresses the idea of caste well:—

‘That the human race might be multiplied, he (Brahma) caused the BRAHMAN, the KSHATRIYA, the VAISYA, and the SUDRA to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot.’<sup>1</sup>

This is made the basis of legislation:—

‘A once-born man who insults the twice-born with gross invectives ought to have his tongue slit; for he sprang from the lowest part of Brahma.’<sup>2</sup>

Each caste had its distinctive duties—the Brahmins to teach and to sacrifice; the Kshatriyas, or warriors, to rule and defend the people; the Vaisyas, or merchants, to trade and to tend cattle; the Sudras to serve the other three. The distinctions between them were sought to be maintained by strict laws about food and intercourse, and by restrictions upon intermarriage.

It will be seen from this account that the Brahmins were at the head of the social system, and that it was their knowledge of the old hymns which was the foundation of their superiority. This knowledge had different effects, as it always will have on different minds. Some used it as a means of impressing their superiority on the more ignorant. Others were led into deeper speculation as to the meaning of what they learned. Hence arose the two classes, Brahman PRIESTS and Brahman SAGES.

The former developed an elaborate ceremonial of sacrifice, that tended to surround them with religious

<sup>1</sup> Inst. of Manu, i. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* viii. 270.



awe. The ancient hymns were gathered into the collection known as the RIG Veda, and two other Vedas were compiled by selections from it—one called the YAJUR Veda, the liturgy of a lower order of priests, to whom was entrusted the material part of the sacrifice; and the other, called the SĀMA Veda, the hymn-book of a higher order of priests, who sang in chorus at certain points during its performance. The Sanskrit word for these hymns is *Mantra*, which in Hindi and in modern Sanskrit means a charm. Some of these charms consist of parts of the hymns of the Rig Veda, which the Brahmans now use without having the slightest idea of their meaning or of whence they are derived. A fourth Veda, called the ATHARVA, was afterwards added, more as a collection of charms than to aid in sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

It would be tedious to enter into all the details of ceremonial which were at this time instituted, and which were all calculated to surround the Brahmans with a halo of sanctity and power. Attached to each of the Vedas a new literature sprang up, called the BRAHMANAS, professing to be a sort of rubric for the use of the Vedas during the sacrifice, but in reality containing many additional commands or stories. They may be considered the priestly literature of the age, and they show in a

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the hymns in the Atharva Veda are probably as old as any in the Rig Veda; but they are collected for an entirely different purpose, for imprecation, and not sacrifice. The beautiful hymn quoted p. 11 is found in the Atharva, but it is there degraded into an introduction to an imprecation. See Prof. Roth, in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v. p. 64.



striking manner the blighting effect which their assumed power and priestly formalism had on the minds of the Brahmans themselves. 'No one would have supposed that at so early a period and in so primitive a state of society, there could have risen up a literature which for pedantry and downright absurdity can hardly be matched anywhere. . . . It is most important to the historian that he should know how soon the fresh and healthy growth of a nation can be blighted by priestcraft and superstition. It is most important that we should know that nations are liable to these epidemics in their youth as well as in their dotage. These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots and the raving of madmen. They will disclose to a thoughtful eye the ruins of faded grandeur, the memories of noble aspirations. But let us only try to translate these works into our own language, and we shall feel astonished that human language and human thought should ever have been used for such purposes.'<sup>1</sup>

On turning to the ideas of God exhibited in these and other records, we see one result of the first error of expressing the Deity by His works—a great development of polytheism. The original meaning of the names of the gods of the Vedas had with the change of language been lost, and no suspicion is betrayed that they have a personality less defined than that of men. Some had dropped out of worship, and others had assumed a foremost place. Indra was still one of the principal gods,

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<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 389.

but VISHNU, a very inferior god in the Vedas, was coming to dispute his supremacy. An entirely new god, BRAHMA, had appeared. The origin of the conception of this god cannot now be determined, but the name seems to have originated with the Brahmans, and they as his worshippers seem to have been called after him. Brāhmān means prayer or sacred rite, and Brāhma, he of prayer. It was possibly a name given originally to whatever god was honoured in sacrifice, and we find him identified with other gods. The root, however, means also increase, and we find Brahma more definitely conceived of as the Creator. Some of the myths with regard to him are merely gross conceptions of the process of creation. He is sometimes represented as producing the universe from an egg, and sometimes by separating himself into male and female. He was specially the god of the Brahmanical caste, but he never came to be popular with the other castes. As old gods assumed new places, or new ones were created, fresh myths, growing constantly more sensuous, gathered around them.

It will already be seen that at this period sacrifice was the great centre of religion. It was as priests of sacrifice that the Brahmans obtained their power, and in connection with sacrifice that the sacred hymns were sung. The word itself, *yajna* or *yāga*,<sup>1</sup> preserves the sacred significance attached to the act in primitive worship; and some of its principal features corresponded closely with those which

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<sup>1</sup> From *yāja* to worship; of Greek *hagio*, and Latin *sacer*.

gave significance to sacrifice under the Levitical law.

The substitutionary nature of sacrifice is clearly affirmed. The sacrificer *is* the animal, and ransoms himself by it. By sacrificing he propitiates the gods, removes his sin, breaks the cords of death, and enters 'the boat that ferrieth over to heaven.' And if the question be put, How can mere sacrifices effect all this? the answer is, That it accomplishes all by faith. 'By faith the fire of sacrifice is kindled; by faith the offering is offered.'<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that the Brahmans attached to their sacrifices a significance and a purpose not very different from that which was attached to the old Levitical sacrifices. Still more suggestive is the difference between the two; the latter were at most typical, the former were sacramental. The Hebrews more than any other nation expressed their sense of the utter inadequacy of mere sacrifice:—

'For Thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it;  
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.'

At the same time, more than any other they persisted in offering them—as divinely commanded, and as the only conceivable way to atone for sin of which they were conscious. The idea of a greater sacrifice—of the Servant of God, who was as a lamb

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<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Hay, of Vizagapatam, in the *Indian Evangelical Review*, January 1874, gives a list of texts from the Brahmanas illustrating these points.

sacrificed to bear the iniquity of all—is expressed in Isaiah. At length, in the death of Christ, the Son of God, on Calvary, the types of Jewish sacrifice were fulfilled; and may we not also say that the yearnings of the human soul expressed in old Brahmanical sacrifice and liturgy found their response—the only response that could fulfil them?

But well-nigh a thousand years before the coming of Christ, the Brahmans had felt and in their own way expressed the truth that only when the Deity was present in sacrifice could it be efficacious. Conscious seemingly that the animal sacrificed could not of itself bear the sin that it was to atone for, or accomplish the work that by its offering was to be accomplished, they boldly declared that God Himself was in the animal sacrificed, and that thus it was efficacious. In this respect Brahmanical sacrifice was sacramental rather than typical; it resembled the sacrifice of the host in the Roman Catholic Church rather than the Levitical sacrifice. The Creator, under the name of PRAJAPATI, is said thus to be offered in sacrifice, and how this is possible is explained with a subtlety that a Jesuit apologist might envy.

‘Prajapati is this sacrifice. Prajapati is both of these two things, uttered and unuttered, finite and infinite. What the priest does with the Yajus text, with that he consecrates the form of Prajapati which is uttered and finite. And what he does silently with that he consecrates the form of Prajapati which is unuttered and infinite.’<sup>1</sup>

But it is more frequently Vishnu that is thus

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<sup>1</sup> Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v. p. 393.

spoken of. He is said to have become incarnate in the animal slain—to have become incarnate in order to be sacrificed, and by his sacrifice to have become the greatest of the gods.

‘Then the gods said, “Whoever among us, through toil, austerity, faith, sacrifice, and oblation, first comprehends the issue of the sacrifice, let him be the most eminent of us; this shall be common to us all.” To this they consented, saying, “Be it so.” Vishnu first attained the proposed object. He became the most eminent of the gods. . . . He who is this Vishnu is sacrifice; he who is this sacrifice is Vishnu.’<sup>1</sup>

This idea has never been entirely forgotten, and even in the latest of the Puranas, the Bhagavata, sacrifice is given as one of twenty-two incarnations of Vishnu. Amid all the puerilities and absurdities of the texts relating to this subject, the truth sought after must not be lost sight of.

But this only increased the original difficulty, and by seeking a premature fulfilment of sacrifice hastened its rejection by India altogether. If it was difficult to believe that an animal could bear man’s sin, it was much more difficult to believe that an animal could be God. We know the repugnance of some earnest, philosophic minds to accept the idea that Christ was God, even though they exhaust the powers of human language in praise of His Godlike character. So too the idea that God was sacrificed as an animal could not but provoke a reaction and alienate the best thought of

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<sup>1</sup> For this and similar texts see Muir’s *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv. pp. 121–29.

the country. It was an idea that could consist only with a blind and tyrannical sacerdotalism, which it helped to exalt, but which it must also help to destroy.

We find, accordingly, alongside of this ritualistic development a rationalistic development, the records of which, called the UPANISHADS, may be looked on as the literature of the Brahman sages, as the Brahmanas are that of the priests. They are the only parts of the Vedas now extensively read in India. They come at the end of the Vedas, and are therefore called VEDANT (Veda end); whence the name of the most influential school of modern Hindu philosophy, which professes to be founded on them. It would be hard to say what philosophical opinion might not be supported on their authority, for the most contradictory statements find a place in them, yet the tendency is on the whole towards pantheism. We have seen that the original error of expressing God by His works developed, on the one hand, into erecting each of the natural phenomena into distinct gods, and thus led to polytheism. In the Upanishads, on the other hand, we see the same error developing into confounding God with His works and His works with God. In the earlier hymns of the Vedas, too, when polytheism had made some way, the worshippers of each individual god sought to exalt it to the position of the one God, by identifying it with other gods, and even with creation. What was at first merely figurative was afterwards viewed as real, what was at first mysticism was afterwards

considered perfect philosophy. We find accordingly, in the latter parts of the Vedas, attempts to explain on a rational basis all the poetical figures of the former parts. In one place it is stated that Self or Spirit alone existed, and he thought let me create the worlds, and he created these worlds. Again, Delusion is called the great principle, and this world the effect of Delusion on Spirit, while elsewhere Delusion is called one of the powers of Spirit. In a word, we find much pantheistic thought but no pantheistic philosophy. The elements existed, but they had not been systematised.

One result of this process of thought was modifying the belief in a future state into the doctrine of the TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS. This doctrine, which makes a man in a future birth atone for the errors of this, strikes at the root of the original idea of sacrifice; but as it is only in modern Hinduism that we find it fully developed, I defer the consideration of it, merely noting that at this time it first appeared on the horizon of Hindu thought and religion. One consequence which it had was the growth of asceticism and the practice of austerities. When happiness in a future state was made to depend on a man's exertions in his present state, it naturally led him to seek to be free from those attachments which might occasion his incurring guilt, and this led again to giving up the plain duties of life for meditation and penance. These came at last to be exalted by some as superior to everything else. Self-denial was sublimated into



self-torture, and became the most generally accepted symbol of sanctity.

These two currents of thought—pantheism and polytheism, philosophy and sacerdotalism—could not, in such a country as India, co-exist without interpenetrating one another. The demon of heresy had not yet appeared, the sages and ascetics professed to be devout worshippers of the gods, and the priests adapted their religion to the ideas of the philosophers with a consistent logic such as could be witnessed in no country but India. It was natural enough that they should take advantage of the doctrine of transmigration by prescribing ceremonies and purifications to attain beatitude in a future state of existence. It was natural enough, too, that they should not be behindhand in the practice of those austerities, which gave them an odour of sanctity with the people and of ridicule with the sceptics. But what shall we say of their declaring austerities to be the source of the power of the gods themselves<sup>1</sup>—the origin of their very divinity, of their calling even the sacrifice of Vishnu an act of penance performed to gain power? When religion had reached this point it had evidently run to seed and was smitten with decay.

Thus, by the disintegration and reintegration of ideas, we see that many of the elements of modern Hinduism had already been developed out of the primitive faith of the Vedas. But other elements were imported from other sources. While the

<sup>1</sup> *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv. p. 181, vol. v. p. 15.



Brahmans had been drivelling and speculating, the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste, had been fighting and conquering. In one conflict, indeed, they seem to have been worsted. They did not at once yield to the Brahmans the superiority which they desired without a bloody struggle. The details of it are altogether lost to us, and the results epitomised with an exaggeration which subsequent events prove to have been altogether false. But this much is known, that a great warrior, called PARASU RAMA, —possibly himself a Brahman,—espoused the cause of the Brahmans, and fought against the Kshatriyas with such success that, in later myths, he is said to have extirpated them three times from the earth. At all events, after this the Brahmans were left undisturbed in their religious and social superiority—the counsellors, the priests, the gods of the warriors and kings, while these were carving out the history of their people.

Two great events belong to this period. The first is the expedition of RAMA CHANDRA from Ayodhia or Oudh to Ceylon to recover his wife, Sita, who had been carried off by the king of that island. On the way he had to encounter many of the savage or semi-civilised tribes south of the Nerbudda, and with many of them he formed alliances. He triumphed at last over Rāvana, king of Ceylon, and returned with his wife to Oudh. This was the first great expedition of the Aryas to the south, and it is imprinted indelibly on the Hindu mind. It became the theme of song—a mass of tradition and exag-

geration gathered round it, and in after ages it became the subject of an epic poem, the RĀMĀ-YANA, which, though full of absurdities and overlaid with Brahmanical conceits, yet contains some of the purest and noblest thoughts to be found in profane poetry.

The second great fact was the struggle for supremacy between two rival Kshatriya races, the Pandavs and the Kauravs. After a bloody war the former triumphed, with the assistance of KRISHNA, a celebrated Indian prince and hero, and their rivals were destroyed. This has produced an even greater impress on the mind of India than the former. Three-fourths of the Hindus are ignorant of all that has happened since. The rise and fall of Buddhism, the rise and fall of Mohammedanism, even the progress of the English, by whom they are now ruled, are for them blank pages of history; but the adventures of the Pandav brothers, two thousand five hundred years ago,—their misfortunes, their patience, their sufferings, their ultimate triumph, and the valour of their great ally Krishna,—are present realities for them; and still, as they are yearly recited at their festivals, melt them into tears, move them into laughter, or excite them to triumph with all the intensity of personal interest. The poem in which their deeds are preserved, the MAHĀBHĀRAT, has been so encrusted with later additions of the Brahmans, didactic pieces, extraneous traditions, and episodes, that it is now almost impossible to say what the original poem was. But we may safely conclude that, at the time

of which we are speaking, the exploits of these warriors were sung and heard with an interest not inferior to that which they now excite; and thus the foundation was being laid of hero-worship, which afterwards became an important factor in Hinduism.

And there was yet another element which, though altogether latent in so far as extant literature is concerned, we must believe existed with an extent and power which subsequent revolutions fully showed. All that we have been considering, in so far as religion, philosophy, and history are concerned, relates only to the twice-born. The once-born Sudras were out of the pale altogether, and considered unfit for any religious exercise or worship. Yet we cannot but suppose that they sought God after their own fashion—that they had a religion, a worship of their own, which their lords might ignore, but which was afterwards to throw its yoke over their own heads. We may suppose that most of the Sudras, the majority of the population of India, worshipped their own fetiches and deities, trees and serpents, stones and idols. Already they were beginning to exercise some effect on the upper castes, for we find the worship of images noticed in Manu.

Such, then, was the state of society before Buddhism appeared in India. An inexorable caste system consigned the bulk of the people to a grinding slavery and hopeless perdition, while it exalted

the priesthood to the level of the gods, and left the warriors to fight and rule, and the merchants to trade and get gain—both to indulge in luxury and sensuality to the extent of their power. A debasing sacerdotalism had been impregnated with a sceptical philosophy, which needed only to be dissociated from it to ensure its overthrow. It must not be supposed that this represented the society of the whole of India at that time. It represents only the Brahmanical conception of society: what the Brahmans wished to make it, and possibly what they had made it where their power was established. But their power was fully established only in a few parts—in others it was less so, and in others not at all. The Sudras in some parts might be able to assert their equality even with the Brahmans, and for whole nations these latter would be but foreign priests. The two opposite extremes of consolidated Brahmanism and undisturbed aboriginal society and aboriginal worship existed, and between the two every shade of opinion existed in a seething, unsettled state—a fertile soil for a new and strong religion to take root in.

## CHAPTER III.

### BUDDHISM.<sup>1</sup>

**B**UDDHA, to whom Buddhism owes its rise, was born about six hundred years before our era in the city of Kapila Vastu, the capital of a kingdom not far from the foot of the Himalayas, of which his father was king. He was of the Kshatriya or warrior caste. The name of the clan was Sakya, whence he is generally called Sakya Muni, or the Sakya sage. His family name was Gautama, by which he is also widely known; his personal name was Siddharta, by which he is least known. Buddha, or The Enlightened, was the name which he assumed when he discovered the truths of his system; by it he is most generally known, and by it I will designate him.

His personal history has come down to us largely overlaid with fable, but from it the main facts of his life have, by various writers, been disentangled with considerable probability. Some of the details that are still accepted may be doubted, but they are regarded as such important factors in the moulding

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<sup>1</sup> In revising this chapter I have consulted chiefly Rhys David's *Buddhism* and *Hibbert Lecture*, and Sir Monier Williams' *Buddhism*.

of his system that they need to be known if it is to be understood.

His mother, Maya, died in childbirth—an incident the knowledge of which is said to have exercised a great influence on him in after-life. He was educated with great care by his father, who, warned by astrologers that his son would one day leave the kingdom and become an anchorite, brought him up in seclusion. Legends are repeated of his purity in the midst of the luxury of his father's court. There is little doubt that he married, and lived for some years in the married state. We may believe that, having an eye for the sorrows of humanity, and a heart that could feel for them, he felt a growing disgust with the luxury by which he was surrounded that ultimately drove him to burst asunder all restraints, and give himself up to asceticism. The occasion of this change in his life, and in the whole religious history of the East, was the following:—One day, when he was driving as usual to his pleasure-garden, he saw a man covered with wrinkles, scarcely able to speak from feebleness, walking tremblingly along, leaning on his staff. He asked the driver who that man was. The charioteer replied that he was a man suffering from OLD AGE, and the consequent decay of all his powers. 'Is that a condition to which he and his family alone are liable, or all mankind?' asked the prince. 'He is no exception,' replied the charioteer; 'all must fall into age and decrepitude.' 'Then drive my chariot home again,' said the prince; 'what have I to do with pleasure who am the future abode of

age and decay!’ On another day he met a loathsome leper, and learned from his charioteer that all men were liable to DISEASE. On a third occasion he saw a dead body, and learned that DEATH is the end of all men. All happiness in his life of luxury had fled, and he set himself to ponder how he might escape the woes of which he had been witness. As he was driving out on a fourth occasion he saw a RECLUSE, and learned from his charioteer that he was a man who had renounced this world’s wealth and pleasure, lived on alms, and spent his time in meditation. This suggested to the prince how he might attain his end. He did not return at once to his home, but drove on to the garden, where he remained some time meditating on what steps he should take. He resolved to follow the example of the hermit, and lead a life such as his till he had discovered a cure for the miseries of mankind.

Full of this great resolve, he returned to the city. The gongs in the temples were sounding, everything betokened that an event of great joy had taken place, and he was met with the news that his wife had just given birth to a son, an heir to the throne. This brought no joy to Buddha; he saw in it only another obstacle to his carrying out his purpose. He retired to his own apartments, and remained there till the festivities of the day had closed, when he went to take farewell of his wife. She was lying asleep, with her new-born babe at her breast. He dared not awake her, for he feared that if he did so his resolution might fail. So he forced himself to leave without saying a word.

Passing through the banqueting hall, he saw a sight which confirmed him in his resolution. The dancing girls who had been engaged for the amusement of the guests had fallen asleep, and were lying on the floor and on the couches in various positions. They presented an appearance so different from the studied attitudes and movements in which they appeared before the guests, an appearance so repulsive, that it put the finishing touch to Buddha's disgust with the life to which he had been born. Was his infant son to grow up with no better means of escaping from the weariness and sorrows of life than could be supplied by such creatures as these?

Then he went out of the palace, called on his groom to saddle his horse, and, taking him with him as his only companion, left the city. He rode all night, and when morning dawned he had reached the limit of his father's kingdom. He dismounted, cut off the locks which as a warrior prince he had worn, assumed the garb of a mendicant, gave his robes and horse to his groom, and sent him back with a message to his father and wife not to seek him; 'for,' said he, 'I will not return till I can bring them tidings of the great deliverance.' So he set out on his quest of a way of deliverance from age, disease, and death. This step is called by the Buddhists the Great Renunciation.

Brahmanism does not seem to have had a great hold in his father's kingdom; but the Brahmans were the recognised religious teachers of the day, and he went to Benares to learn what he could from them. He soon found that they were blind



leaders of the blind, utterly unable to solve any of his difficulties. He resolved, therefore, to go to the jungle, and try a life of the severest abstinence and mortification of the flesh. In this he persevered, though he was entreated by his relatives to return; and he was followed by some Brahmanas who admired his devotion. Six years he continued to afflict himself with fasting, till his strength wasted away and he one day fainted. When he recovered he was overcome with horror at the thought of how nearly he had passed away without having discovered the remedy he was seeking.

He resolved to change his plan, to take more food, and to care for his bodily wants. This implied a renunciation scarcely less great than the former. He cut himself off, also, from the sympathy he had secured. His Brahman followers thought he was relapsing into worldliness. They returned to Benares, and left him alone to solve the problem of humanity.

He was on the point of giving up the quest, but again he made the endeavour. He took with him food sufficient to support him forty days, went into the jungle, took up his abode beneath a mimosa tree, which has therefore become sacred to Buddhists, and gave himself up to the closest thought and meditation. He had while there, especially towards the close, to endure a fearful mental struggle. Demons seemed to assault him, and to try to turn him aside from his search. But at last he saw clearly the solution of all his difficulties. The 'FOUR VERITIES,' by which he thought the

way of deliverance was to be attained, rose before him. Of these I will speak subsequently, when we turn to his system. Meanwhile, I continue the history.

He had now obtained for himself the desired knowledge; but he had to pass through another struggle equally severe before he could face the ordeal of teaching the new doctrine in public. At last he triumphed; he returned to Benares, as he said to one whom he met on the way, to roll 'the wheel of the law' he had discovered, so that, like a chariot, the news of deliverance might run its course through the earth. He first sought out the Brahmans who had followed and then forsaken him, and they became his first disciples. He taught for some time at Benares, and then visited other places. His doctrines spread with rapidity, and kings even became his disciples. He returned to his native town, and persuaded his father, wife, and relatives to accept his law. He never swerved from the manner of life he had chosen, but continued to the end a recluse, without a single worldly possession, never asking for food, but taking all that was given him. He received into his society all who came to him, making no distinction between the low-born Sudra and the high-born Brahman. So he went about from city to city and village to village till he was eighty years of age, when, one day having partaken of some unwholesome food, and having afterward walked a long distance, he was seized with dysentery, and died, or, as the Buddhists now say, entered Nirvana.

*System of Buddha.*—I have given these details of the legend of Buddha's life, as they are needful to understand his system and the influence which it has had. What now was the law which with such agony he discovered, and with such self-denial and success proclaimed? We must lead up to it in the way in which Buddha himself led up to it. His system is announced in the Four Verities which he discovered beneath the mimosa tree. It will be remembered that the object of his quest in leaving his father's house was to discover how old age, disease, and death could be conquered.

1. The first truth then teaches the cause of suffering. If the cause is found it may be removed. The cause he teaches to be existence. The first verity is, 'Wherever there is existence there is suffering.'

2. The next question was, What causes existence to continue? The proper question might seem to be, What causes existence? But Buddha said, 'I have nothing to do with that: I exist, and I have only to find out how I may cease to exist.' Death, he believed, as we shall subsequently see, did not put an end to existence. What prevented its doing so? The answer he believed to be, The instinctive craving for life in man. So his second verity is, 'The lust of life prevents the cessation of existence.'

3. Having discovered this, he thought he saw a way to the attainment of his end; this lust of life man could deal with. His third verity is, 'The conquest of the lust of life will lead to the cessation of existence.'

4. There remained only to teach how to conquer

the lust of life; for this he promulgated his law. The fourth verity is, 'The law of Buddha is the path that leads to the conquest of the lust of life.'

This law we shall presently state; meanwhile, let us seek to understand more fully the system of the universe enunciated in these verities. Underlying it is the system of thought and religion in which Buddha himself had been brought up.

It implies the doctrine of TRANSMIGRATION. This seems to be inhaled with the very air of the East, and it had secured its place in the Brahmanical system. Buddha adopted it as the only explanation he could get of the mysteries of existence, but he did not adopt it in the sense in which it is usually accepted. He did not believe in the separate existence of the soul, so he could not teach the transmigration of the soul. But he taught that when one being died the same being was born again, in the sense of the same parts and powers being brought together again—like the parts of a Chinese puzzle, always the same, though put up in different forms. This involves an idea too abstract to be stable, and the idea of personal transmigration, the transmigration of the soul, has been the practical one among the Buddhists, one from which even Buddha himself could not escape.

Buddha also accepted the Brahmanical pantheon, its heavens with their gods as well as its hells with their demons, but these, he taught, were merely places and forms of existence analogous to earth and its inhabitants, and subject to the same laws. We have seen that in ancient Brahmanism some

gods were believed to have attained their divinity by religious austerities. This practically overthrew their divinity, and made them subject to a higher law; and Buddha drew from it the conclusion that they were subject to the same laws as man. They had gained their high position by good deeds; but they were liable to decay, and must, if they continued to exist, pass into another condition—become men, animals, demons, or some other form of existence. What was the law that determined this? It was KARMA, and this is a word which all must learn to understand who would understand Buddhism. The conception, and possibly the name, existed before Buddha's time, but, as far as we can judge, he gave it the definite meaning and place which it has in his cosmical system. Karma means properly 'deeds;' it means with Buddha the fruition or consequences of deeds, and from that the law which regulates these consequences. Every deed must have some result: man's present deeds determine what he shall be and do in his next existence; his present condition has been determined by his deeds in a previous existence, no deed remaining without its effect. There is in this idea an anticipation of the doctrine of the indestructibility of force; but it is a moral rather than a physical force, a power which holds together the elements that are dissolved at death, and brings them together in a new form to receive the fruition—the reward or punishment—due to the former.

This doctrine of Karma is one of the elements of Buddha's system which has survived in modern

Hinduism, but in the latter it has an even more absolute position. No modern Hindu dreams of the possibility of escaping from the power of Karma; but Buddha asserted the superiority of the human will. Karma regulated, it did not cause, existence; it necessitated what man must be if he continued to exist, and man could not control it. But it did not necessitate that man should exist; that depended on man's lust of life, and this lust man could control and conquer. The object of Buddha's law is to teach man how to conquer this lust. When he has conquered it, he has attained Nirvana.

NIRVĀNA is a word as needful for the understanding of Buddhism as Karma, but it is as difficult to translate. Its etymological meaning is extinction, or being without possession; but it is not, as has been said, extinction of being. Buddha, before his death, is said to have used these words: 'Through various transmigrations have I passed, always vainly seeking to discover the builder of my tabernacle. Painful are repeated transmigrations, but now, O builder, thou art discovered. Never shalt thou build me another house. Thy frames are broken, thy ridge-pole shattered; to Nirvana my mind has gone. I have attained to the extinction of desire.' This shows the original conception of Nirvana—not annihilation, not unconsciousness after death, but extinction of desire before death—the extinction of that sinful selfishness which leads to renewed existence. Nirvana is thus not annihilation, but the condition which secures it; it is not a state into which one enters at death, but a state into which

one enters in life, and which secures that there shall be nothing beyond death.

And how is this Nirvana to be attained? For this he prescribed the LAW which we have now to consider, and which is the great glory of Buddhism. It is here that he comes into most direct conflict with Brahmanism. Having repudiated the gods, he repudiated all worship. Sacrifice was an abomination to him, occasioning pain without securing any good. Caste, too, he ignored, and its rules he set aside. The asceticism and self-torture of religious devotees he also taught were useless. The law which he prescribed for attaining the highest good is the moral law—the law of Christ, without Christ and without God. The first great command of the law, to love God, he could not teach, for he did not believe in God. But the second great command, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ he fully taught. ‘Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you:’ all these commands have their counterpart in the teaching of Buddha.

His law has a kernel—like the decalogue. It has five negative commands—forbidding the taking of life, stealing, adultery, falsehood, and the use of strong drink; and six positive commands—enjoining charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation, and science. These laws are developed into all the relations of life in a manner more extended than even the laws of the Pentateuch. Taking up any section of them, it is impossible not to be struck with the pure and withal kindly morality that



pervades them. We seem to have in them laws which should secure a perfect state of society if it can be secured by law.

Obedience to this law was, however, only the first step towards attaining Nirvana; the next step was entering the priesthood. This is the surer method, and only those should enter it who by their lay life have shown a capacity for higher attainment. Both sexes may enter the priesthood. Celibacy is enjoined on those who do; and in addition to all the virtues enjoined on the laity they are required to avoid all luxury and self-seeking, to live abstemiously, to be contented with what is given to them, to engage in meditation, and to teach the laity. Many additional commands are given and restrictions laid down, some of which have a tendency to morbidness; but the prime idea of the Buddhist priesthood seems to be a condition of further discipline and more exalted usefulness.

Such was the plan of salvation devised by Buddha—a holy life amid the various occupations of the world, leading to a more exalted life of celibacy and service, this leading to the extinction of all desire, this leading to extinction of existence, and this to release from misery. Cease to be sinful, and you will cease to exist; become perfectly holy, and you will become nothing.

*Spread of Buddhism.*—This was the gospel which Buddha proclaimed, and which soon began to spread rapidly through India. The character of its founder, no doubt, contributed greatly to this. He is the



one instance of a human teacher who in his life was more than his teaching. Whatever he might call on his followers to do, he had done more. None of them could renounce more than he had renounced, or endure more than he had endured. The spectacle of him renouncing all that man most prizes; going into the desert, and agonising there for six years; and at last, alone and deserted, without even a ray of hope in a God to cheer him, withstanding all the temptations that came on him, working out his conception of man's deliverance; then hastening, in overflowing sympathy, to communicate it to all who would hear him; and, when he had attracted thousands of followers, still continuing the poorest of the poor—is one of the grandest pictures of self-denial and service which the world has produced, and was a constant testimony before all men to the sincerity of his convictions, the depth of his sympathy. Let us try to imagine what must have been the effect of this example on the down-trodden Sudras and low castes, who had been trained to believe that they were beyond the pale of religion—to be told that there was no difference between them and their lords—to find themselves welcomed to instruction in the mysteries of religion, no difference being made between the lowest and the highest if there was but a sincere desire for the truth—to learn that there was but one way of deliverance for the high caste and the out-caste, for the Brahman and the Sudra. They saw all that he had endured to do them this good, and they could say, though in an altogether earthly

sense, 'Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.' What must the effects of this have been on all those among the higher castes who had any noble or generous feelings left? When we remember all this we may cease to wonder at the effect which his life and teaching had.

Buddhism not only rose above caste; it rose above nationality. It was the first religion adapted equally for all nations. The germs of such universalism were indeed contained in Judaism. Before this time the Jews had sung in the Temple service, 'God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.' But it was not till six hundred years after Buddha that this seed fructified, and He in whom Judaism was fulfilled gave the command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Buddha was the first to teach a religion which might be common to all men, and to seek to awaken in man's heart the idea of a brotherhood as broad as the human race. One fatal defect, even in its humanitarian aspect, prevents Buddhism ever being the universal religion—its teaching that asceticism and celibacy are essentials of religion. But it admits men and women of all castes and of all nations to the priesthood, and thus provides for universal diffusion.

In spreading his doctrines, Buddha had but one instrument—persuasion. Subsequent legends do represent him as performing miracles, but this was a power which he himself disclaimed. When urged by

a king to perform miracles so as to confound his enemies, he replied, 'The law which I teach my disciples is not—Go before the Brahmans, and by the help of supernatural power perform miracles greater than men can perform. The law I give them is this—Be silent about your good deeds, and confess your sins.' He likewise repudiated all force or constraint in spreading his doctrine. Even when the most powerful kings had become his disciples, and were ready to put their armies at his disposal, he refused all means but persuasion and teaching; and in this respect Buddhists have obeyed the teaching of their master better than Christians have obeyed the teaching of theirs.<sup>1</sup> His own example inspired many to become missionaries of his religion with a devotedness like his own. The following legend may serve as an illustration:—

A rich merchant of the name of Purna had become a convert to Buddha's teaching, and, renouncing all his wealth, resolved to fix his abode among a neighbouring savage tribe, whom he wished to convert to the law. Buddha at first tried to discourage him.

'The men of Sronaparanta, whither thou wilt go,' he said to him, 'are violent, cruel, furious, and insolent. When they utter wicked, gross, and insolent words to thy face, when they grow angry with thee and abuse thee, what wilt thou think?'

'This is what I will think,' replied Purna; 'these men are certainly good and kind, who do not strike me either with their hands or with stones.'

'But if they strike thee with their hands and with stones, what wilt thou think of them?'

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<sup>1</sup> Admirers of Buddhism claim that it has *never* been spread by force. But it is difficult to distinguish between King Asoka's edicts to abolish sacrifice and establishing religion by force.

‘I will think that they are good and kind, as they do not strike me with sticks or with the sword.’

‘But if they strike thee with sticks or with the sword, what wilt thou think of them?’

‘I will think them good and kind, as they do not take my life.’

‘But if they take thy life, what wilt thou think of them?’

‘I will think the men of Sronaparanta good and kind, to deliver me with so little pain from this body full of vileness.’

‘It is well,’ replied Buddha, ‘with such perfect patience thou canst live among the Sronaparantas. Go then, O Purna, delivered thyself, deliver others; thyself arrived on the other shore, bring others there; thyself consoled, do thou console; thyself arrived at Nirvana, teach others the way.’

Purna, thus encouraged, went to dwell among that tribe, and by his gentleness and resignation won them from their savage customs to the law.

Whether this story be true or not, its very conception shows a standard of missionary courage and devotedness that, with all its exaggerations, accounts for the rapid spread of Buddhism through India.

*Defects of Buddhism.*—The permanent effects of Buddha’s life and teaching on India have been very great; and this we shall see when we come to consider modern Hinduism. But Buddhism has also defects and weaknesses which proved fatal to it in the land of its birth, and which must ultimately prove fatal to it throughout the world.

By some Buddhism is lauded as the best and most rational of all religions. Some have even pretended to see in the life of Christ but a Palestinian reproduction of the legend of Buddha. Yet when

any of the points is examined, the resemblance is but the resemblance of contrast. The temptation of Christ in the wilderness has been compared with the temptation of Buddha; but the resemblance is merely what is common to human nature. No man ever produced a great effect in religion, either of origination or reform, without having passed through a spiritual struggle himself; and the character of his struggle and triumph has given character to the influence he has exerted on the world. This was true of Luther and Loyola, it was true of Buddha, and it was true also of Christ, who in this, as in everything, was true man. But when we compare the two struggles, nothing could be more utterly unlike. The temptations which came on Buddha were entirely superhuman, and the power in which he met them entirely human. The temptations which came on Christ were such as come on all men, and the means by which He met them such as all men have, but the power with which He met them was divine. Buddha began the conflict in utter darkness, and all that he discovered was a principle of action; Christ began with a perfect knowledge of all that was required of man, and He resisted every temptation to forget it. Buddha discovered the principle of self-renunciation; Christ acted throughout on the principle, Thy will be done. Buddha attained the hope of eternal death; Christ acted in the strength of eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a full study of the alleged points of comparison between Buddha and Christ, see *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*, by Dr. S. H. Kellogg.

This initial struggle indicates the fatal defect of Buddha's religion—it is without God, without hope. It looks to annihilation as the final end ; but human nature refuses to accept this, and now practically, wherever it has spread, Nirvana has come to mean a state of blissful, unconscious beatitude beyond death—a state which it is almost hopeless for man to seek to attain. There is a school of Christian thought which teaches that the soul has no natural immortality, but that annihilation is the end of all who do not believe in Christ. What witness does the East bear to the moral influence or practical acceptability of such a doctrine? Annihilation—whether as taught by the Buddhists or as pantheistically modified by the Hindus—is the end sought by the millions of India and the further East. They believe that it is to be attained only by perfect holiness. This new doctrine teaches that it is certainly to be attained by continued wickedness. If it were to spread in these lands, morality would lose what sanction it has in religion, and the eternal life offered by Christianity would not seem a boon. Buddhism bears witness to the fact that man desires annihilation ; it also bears witness to the fact that annihilation is unattainable by man even in thought. Nirvana has changed its meaning, from a state of absence of desire before death, to a state of quiet repose after death, in which Buddha himself exists. The Buddhists now say of Buddha he entered Nirvana, to say he entered death. Both in Buddhism and in Hinduism the immense number of births which they say must be passed through

before it is attained is practically saying that it is unattainable.

This false conception of the end of religion was a necessary consequence of the ATHEISM which pervades the system. It denies the soul of man; it denies God, the soul of the universe. In this it resembles Positivism, and other systems that are now wooing Christendom. All that is best in their systems was offered to the world two thousand years ago in Buddhism, in it presented to man in a way far more satisfying to his religious nature than in any of them, and none the less found wanting.

One of our best Buddhist scholars<sup>1</sup> says: 'The great merit of Buddha is that he swept away the soul theory.' True; but he could not sweep away the soul *fact*. We have already seen how he could not escape it for himself, nor could he escape it for the universe. Having with terrible logic classed gods and demons with men as different orders of beings, heaven and hell with earth as places through which the stream of being must pass, while he denied the existence of the soul and the existence of God, he was yet forced to admit a mystery—a power real though unknowable—and in the doctrine of Karma to erect an altar to the unknown God.

But not the less were the defects of atheism felt in the system. By it Buddha shut himself out from the possibility of having any divine revelation; he based his authority only on knowledge, and that knowledge intuitional. He, indeed, claimed to have

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<sup>1</sup> Rhys David, *Hibbert Lecture*.



arrived at perfect knowledge, and those who became his disciples were required to acknowledge this, but his claim did not rest on the possession of any power or means of knowledge which other men had not. His religion contrasts in this way most markedly with that of Moses. The Hebrew lawgiver, on the broad basis of a divine revelation and authority, promulgated a religion which offered, in the first instance, only an earthly rest and earthly rewards, and the truth of which every one could test by its fruits. The Indian lawgiver, on the narrow basis of his own intuition and deductions, sought to establish a system of rewards and punishments passing through thousands of millions of ages and thousands of worlds, ending in extinction, the evidence of which was beyond the reach of all.

But a more important defect consequent on atheism is the absence of all power. Buddhism is a moral system, but it is not a moral power. It offered India a perfect morality without God, but it failed to make India moral, or to secure any hold on it. It offers nothing to satisfy the religious sense in man. Its appeal is to knowledge, not to faith. This prevents a true conception of duty. The conception of accountability to God for the use of our talents is impossible in Buddhism. The words of King Arthur—

‘This life

I guard as God’s high gift from scathe and wrong,’  
could never have been uttered by a Buddhist king.

This want was felt by Buddha’s successors. He came to be practically deified; legends attributing to



him superhuman power gathered round the story of his life; his writings and sayings, and legends regarding him, were gathered into a sacred canon. The need of an object of worship was, if tradition may be believed, felt by Buddha himself. The author of Positivism in France felt this too, and tried to satisfy the craving by inventing a worship having for its object 'woman' in the threefold relation of mother, wife, and daughter. So too the greater author of a greater system, more than two thousand years ago, found that he needed an object of worship. One of his dearest friends having been killed, he preserved some relics of him, with a care and devotion which has introduced the worship of relics into Buddhism.

In another respect Positivism seems to be following the course of Buddhism. Statues of great men are set up in its halls of assembly; days are consecrated to them, and thus an attempt at a cult is being made. This casts light on the origin of Buddhist idolatry. Statues of Buddha and of other saints were erected, and divine honours were paid to them, till Buddhism, which began by denying that there is a God to be worshipped, has come to include the worship of thousands of idols.

It is, no doubt, chiefly in Northern Buddhism<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Southern Buddhists, who follow more closely the teaching of Buddha, are found in Ceylon, Burmah, Anam, and Siam, and number close on 30,000,000. The Northern Buddhists, among whom we get the Buddhist doctrine grossly corrupted, are found in the Himalayan countries and those to the north-east of Asia. They are calculated to number 470,000,000. This would, however, include all Confucianists and Taoists in China and Shintoists in Japan. If they were reckoned separately, it might reduce the number by three-fourths.

that this lapse into idolatry has taken place. There, too, it has incorporated a system of sacerdotalism as stringent as the Brahmanical, and a debased ritualism on a level with the lowest fetichism. Not only are prayers offered in an unknown tongue, but it is not even necessary to repeat them. They are put into cylinders, and these are made to revolve by the hand, by water power, or by the wind, and each revolution is considered a prayer. Buddhism is the only religion which has sanctioned praying by machinery. But it would be as unfair to charge these corruptions to Buddhism as to charge Roman Catholic corruptions to Christianity. They were probably old religious practices and tenets of the lands into which Buddhism penetrated, and were absorbed by it as many of the old pagan festivals were absorbed by Christianity.

But it has also to be observed that Buddhism has seldom established itself as the sole religion in any land. Even now in Ceylon, where it is supposed to have had undisputed sway for twenty centuries, it fails to satisfy the religious wants of the people. 'In Ceylon the people look to Buddhism for deliverance as to the future world. By its instrumentality they suppose that they can gain merit; but for present assistance, when the burden of affliction is heavy upon them, their resort is to the demon priest with his incantations and sacrifices.'<sup>1</sup> We cannot suppose that during the time it spread over India it was anything more satisfactory. It was accepted by the people as a protest against

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<sup>1</sup> Hardy, *Legends and Theories of the Buddhists.*

priestly pretensions and caste tyranny, but when the test of religion—the hour of trial and affliction—came upon them, they still resorted to the idols and fetiches which they had been wont to worship. A system thus defective and one-sided is smitten with decay ; it has foes in its own stronghold, with which an enemy has only to unite in order to accomplish its overthrow.

This was what took place with Buddhism in India. In two or three centuries it was triumphant throughout the Peninsula, while Brahmanism was confined to the small kingdom of Kanauj on the Ganges.<sup>1</sup> But a struggle then began, which continued till the twelfth century, and resulted in the complete expulsion or absorption of Buddhism, and the establishment of Hinduism throughout India.

Thus while Buddhism is the only great religious system constructed without a God, it has become the most signal evidence that a religion without God is an impossibility for man—that the purest moral teaching will not make men pure—that a system which ignores God will come to be overrun with utter travesties of deity, and will not be able to hold its own against systems which, however inferior to it as codes of morals, frankly acknowledge the Supernatural. Buddhism comes fraught with the experience of twenty-three centuries warning this age of science and agnosticism, of materialism and scepticism, that man cannot live without God. The most splendid religion of humanity, the most

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<sup>1</sup> Marshman's *History of India*, vol. i. p. 11.

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perfect system of morality that man has produced, has failed because it ignores God.

*Jainism.*

The only religion now in India that has any resemblance to Buddhism is that of the Jains, and it seems to have been of contemporaneous though independent origin. It is interesting chiefly as an evidence that the currents of thought embodied in Buddhism were in Buddha's time affecting others besides him.<sup>1</sup>

The original founder of the sect was Pārswa, or PĀRSWANĀTH, as he was afterwards called. He was the son of King Aswasena, and of one of the noblest royal families in India. He became an ascetic when he was thirty years old, and died about the age of a hundred, on Sikhar, a mountain in Southern Behar. Two hundred and fifty years after him, according to Jain chronology, MAHĀVĪRA was born of the same stem. He became an ascetic at the age of twenty-eight, and died when he was about seventy-two. The chief difference between him and Parswanath was, that while the latter always wore one garment, Mahavira carried his mortification of the body further, and dispensed

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<sup>1</sup> The Jains maintain that Mahavira was the teacher of Buddha. They fix his death about 570 B.C., or about thirty years before the usually accepted date of the death of Buddha. Some European scholars, such as Colebrooke and Stevenson, are inclined to agree with this, while others, such as Benfey, make the origin of this sect to have been about the tenth century after Christ, but the latest investigations confirm the earlier date.

with every sort of covering. Hence the two divisions of the Jains have sprung up, the SWETAMBRAS, clothed in white, and the DIGAMBRAS, clothed in space. The latter, however, while still the stricter sect, do not carry out their principles with regard to dress.

These two are said to be the last of the twenty-four JINAS or TIRTHANKARAS,<sup>1</sup> who constitute the chief object of Jain-worship. The preceding twenty-two are evidently fictions, but in the first of them, RIKHABH DEVA, we have some trace of real historic tradition. Like the Buddhists, the Jains are atheists. They believe in the eternity of the universe both of matter and of mind—the latter including the elements of human souls—which has been undergoing a series of revolutions produced by the inherent powers of nature without the intervention of any eternal Deity, no such Being, according to them, existing independent of the world. Certain of the world's elements may be sublimated into gods, who inhabit the various heavens that exist; but they are inferior to the Tirthankaras, and must again enter the various hells, or become animals and men as they have been before, till they finally triumph over matter, and can exist free from its trammels. This has by meditation been attained by the twenty-four Tirthankaras, and through their merit by several thousand disciples who were on earth when they

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<sup>1</sup> Jina means conqueror, one who has triumphed over the passions. This was also a name of Buddha. Tirthankara means the 'author of a *tirth*,' or place of pilgrimage, visiting which confers salvation. But 'the Jain *tirth* is a moral *tirth*.'

attained beatitude. This is the only way in which, according to the Jain religion, final beatitude can be attained, and they themselves acknowledge that the way of salvation is thus limited to very few. In this respect it presents a remarkable contrast to Buddhism, in which the way of salvation is equally open to all. In their cosmical system they are nearer the Hindus, while they agree with the Buddhists in their moral code,<sup>1</sup> and in the extreme respect which they pay to animal and even insect life. They have even in some cities erected and endowed hospitals for diseased animals.

There has been a good deal of discussion as to whether this religion or that of Buddha is the older—as to whether Buddhism is derived from Jainism or Jainism from Buddhism. There seems now no reason to doubt the claim made by the Jains that their founder, Mahavira, died thirty years before Buddha; but it would be quite a wrong inference to conclude that therefore Buddhism is derived from Jainism. It is very seldom that any great movement of reform is absolutely solitary, or that the considerations which influence one mind will not influence another also. When the conditions are present, when the same bases of thought and faith exist, when the same perversions and

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<sup>1</sup> This consists in enjoining five duties and forbidding five sins. The duties are—1st, mercy to all animated beings; 2nd, alms-giving; 3rd, venerating the sages while living and worshipping their images when deceased; 4th, confession of faults; 5th, religious fasting.

The sins are—1st, killing; 2nd, lying; 3rd, stealing; 4th, adultery; 5th, worldly-mindedness.

abuses are manifest, it is natural that similar remedies will suggest themselves to different minds, though one of greater originality and force will probably take the lead. There can be little doubt that, in the era of the Reformation, Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland worked on entirely independent lines. Both had, as a basis of belief, the Bible; and both had to face the corruptions of the Church of Rome. It is not surprising, therefore, that they should both arrive at similar results, while neither derived his theology from the other; and the difference between the two is manifest till to-day in the Churches which they founded.

The account I have given, in the former chapter, of the state of religion in India before the appearance of Buddhism shows a state of corruption that might well have roused many an earnest mind to seek to reform it. The ideas of Transmigration and of Karma already existed, the merits of an ascetic life were believed in, and the moral law was written on the hearts of all. These are the elements of both religions, and it is not surprising that two such men as Buddha and Mahavira should have appeared simultaneously and worked out these elements independently, and with the different results that appear in their different systems; while Parswanath will fall into a position somewhat analogous to that of Huss or Wycliffe in Europe, the forerunner of a coming Reformation. But Buddha's was the more thoroughgoing, the more logical and higher moral system. Above all, it was



humanitarian, and had all the elements of universalism, while Jainism had those of the narrowest sectarianism. It is thus not surprising that Buddhism should have become one of the world-religions, while its rival is only one of the smaller sects of India. At one time its followers seem to have spread extensively, but they are now numerically small, and are found chiefly in Bombay, Guzerat, and Rajputana. They number about 1,400,000, are enterprising men of business, and an altogether disproportionate part of the wealth of the country is in their hands.

In one respect the present position of Jainism is quite as striking a testimony to the power of Hinduism as the expulsion of Buddhism from India. In its earlier history it opposed Hinduism, or rather, Brahmanism, with a bitterness not found in any of the early Buddhist writings. In the Kalpa Sutra, the history of Mahavira, that Tirthankara is represented as having been conceived in the womb of the wife of a Brahman, whereupon Indra, the chief of the gods, is represented as reflecting, 'Surely such a thing as this has never happened in past, happens not in present, nor will happen in future times, that an Arhat, a Chakravarti, a Baladeva, or a Basudeva, should be born in a low caste family, a servile family, a degraded family, a poor family, a mean family, a beggar's family, or a Brahman's family.' He is accordingly represented as sending a messenger to remove him to the womb of a woman of royal caste. Such was the original attitude of Jainism; now, however, the Brahmans



have regained their ascendancy. Some of the Swetambaras have them as priests in their temples. The Jains have come in respect of caste and other practices to differ little from the Hindus. By a decision of the Bombay High Court, it has been ruled that the laws of the orthodox Hindus are binding on them.

Thus Hinduism has showed in its struggle with Jainism the power of reducing an antagonistic religion to quiescence and a certain degree of similarity and amalgamation, which we shall subsequently see illustrated in its struggle with Mohammedanism and even with Christianity.

## PART II.—HINDUISM.



### CHAPTER IV.

#### HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

**B**UDDHISM seems to have culminated in India about the beginning of our era. Two hundred years before that time it assumed a character decidedly hostile to Brahmanism. At first, though utterly opposed in principle to its claims, it seems to have existed alongside of it on a basis of mutual toleration. But the decrees of King Asoka, a convert to Buddhism and paramount sovereign of India, showed an intention to make the new faith universal in India, to the destruction of the older one. This stirred up the Brahmans to do more earnest battle for their religion, quickened their intellectual life, and made them more pliable in adapting their system to the religious ideas of the various tribes and castes with whom they came into contact. This Brahmanical revival continued to struggle with Buddhism, and by the twelfth century of our era had extirpated it from India. It is to it that modern Hinduism owes its character; and it is, therefore, of more practical interest, and more deserving the study of those who wish to know the religious condition of the millions of our fellow-subjects whom it has influ-

enced, than any form of religious thought that preceded it.

The brief survey we have taken of the earlier religions of India, while leaving many questions still unanswered, will yet prepare us for better understanding that complex and subtle system with which Christianity has now to contend. I will not touch on the political movements which aided it, or the warriors and kings who established it by force of arms, but will rather seek to indicate those principles and methods, still in operation, by which it triumphed over its great foe, and attached to itself, or is still attaching to itself, the various races of India. I must now ask the English reader to follow me into a somewhat abstruse and difficult field; to enter a region and method of thought most likely quite foreign to him, but which it is necessary to master to some extent in order to understand Hindu idolatry. To try to explain this on the basis of English ideas is about as hopeful as trying to explain Indian jugglery on the basis of English regimental drill. I can only promise to endeavour to make the subject as clear as it is capable of being made to persons accustomed to entirely other modes of thought.

There are two distinct features in the Brahmanical revival which must be understood in order to grasp the present character of Hinduism—the intellectual revival among the Brahmans, producing HINDU PHILOSOPHY, and the application of that philosophy to the popular superstitions, producing the HINDU RELIGION.

The first step in the establishment of modern Hinduism was the revival of intellectual activity among the Brahmans. Appeal to the authority of the Vedas was now of no use to them. Their Buddhist adversaries required them to prove all things. They therefore strove to combat them with their own weapons, and in succession rose the six schools of Hindu philosophy.<sup>1</sup> These all started with the professed acknowledgment of the Vedas as the rule of faith, but, except one (which, strangely enough, while ignoring God, makes the eternity of the Word its fundamental principle), they all practically ignore the Vedas, and found their systems on the deductions of pure reason. The Vedas are now, for the majority of the Hindus, only the shadow of a name; so that in this respect Buddhism has practically remained victor; while it again, by accepting a sacred canon of its own, may be said to have been vanquished by Brahmanism—a fact which its opponents have not been slow to point out. I do not propose to give any account of these various systems, or of the dialectics by which they are supported, but will seek to exhibit their effect in moulding Hindu thought to the form in which we actually find it.

To understand any philosophy or religion aright, we must know what it teaches to be the highest good. Ask a Hindu what is the chief end of man, and he will answer, LIBERATION,<sup>2</sup> whether he be

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B, Schools of Hindu Philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Mukti.

peasant or pundit. Ask him what he means by Liberation, and he will say that it is 'to cut short the eighty-four.'<sup>1</sup> Here we are already in a sphere of thought and expression quite foreign to the European, and requiring explanation.

The Hindus, then, believe man's spirit to be a part of the Divine Spirit, an emanation from it which must return to it again. Meanwhile it is in bondage from its union with the body or with matter, and the great aim of man should be to free his spirit from this union, so that it may again be at liberty to join the Supreme. Or, as the Hindus say: Man and God are one; but man, owing to ignorance and delusion, cannot now recognise this identity; his chief aim should, therefore, be liberation from this ignorance and delusion, so as to recognise his oneness with God. Such is the briefest possible statement of what is meant by Liberation, but I must dwell on it more in detail.

The fundamental principle of Hindu philosophy is, that out of nothing nothing can be made; hence whatever now exists must be accounted for by what has previously existed, and therefore our spirits must have existed before. Another principle now almost universally adopted is that of the great Unity;<sup>2</sup> that there is only one really existent Being, who is from everlasting to everlasting—the SUPREME SPIRIT.<sup>3</sup> He alone is, everything else is

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<sup>1</sup> Chaurassi Katna.

<sup>2</sup> Ekamevadwitiyam, one only, without a second.

<sup>3</sup> Paramâtman. When the Supreme Spirit becomes conditioned, i.e. after what we call creation has taken place, it becomes the Supreme Lord, Parameshwara.

not. Our spirits must, therefore, be part of Him. Such is the argument of the VEDANTA, the most influential school of modern Hindu philosophy.

Now the question comes, Who or what is this Supreme Spirit? It has often been objected to the Vedantic Deity, that it is a mere abstraction and negation, and that, therefore, the system is atheistic as much as Buddhism. This is founded on the word always used in characterising the Supreme, which in popular language means void of qualities. But the word means primarily without bonds, or unfettered, and this is rather the sense in which it is used in Hindu philosophy. Man's spirit is fettered by union with the body, but not so the Supreme Spirit. He is free. The word which in modern European philosophy corresponds most nearly with it is Unconditioned. Those who are not familiar with philosophical expressions may form some idea of what that means by trying to conceive the existence of God before anything was created. This is the point which Ballantyne maintains Brahmanical philosophers have grasped with a far clearer and firmer hold than English or even German thinkers,—the distinction between the Unconditioned<sup>1</sup> and the Conditioned.<sup>2</sup> Now what do the former declare Unconditioned Spirit to be? They say that it is BEING, THOUGHT, and JOY.<sup>3</sup>

We, trained alike by the testimony of our own consciousness and by the teaching of our faith to believe in the personality of God, and to think of

<sup>1</sup> Nirgun.

<sup>2</sup> Sagun.

<sup>3</sup> Sat, Chit, Anand, Sachchidananda.

Him as distinct from ourselves, have difficulty in conceiving an impersonal God, and in perceiving the full bearing of the above definition. But let us try to introduce into it the idea of personality and consequent relationship, and chiefly the relationship of the Creator to the creature, imparting what He Himself has; and we have: the imparters of Being—the Creator; the imparters of Thought—the Word; the imparters of Joy—the Comforter. Here, then, we have in the Vedantic Trinity a certain analogy to the Christian Trinity. How this may have arisen we cannot now determine. We cannot say what interchanges of thought may have taken place in the earlier ages of the world. Long before this idea of the Supreme Spirit had been formulated by Hindu philosophy, the germs of the idea of a Trinity had been introduced into Grecian philosophy, and may have been carried into India in the intercourse which the Greeks kept up with it in the second and third centuries before our era. There was also constant communication between Egypt and India at the time when the Judæo-Grecian school of philosophy flourished at Alexandria, ere the Vedanta school rose in India. But I refrain from entering on the field of investigation thus opened up, merely noting the fact, however it may be accounted for, and whatever may be its value, that such is the Hindu idea of the Supreme Spirit, and that on this prime question of theology the distinction between Christianity and Hinduism is as to the personality of God.

But in maintaining that the human spirit is part

of the Divine Spirit, the Hindu is met by those facts which for the Englishman at once decide the question, and against which the whole of Hindu philosophy is a vain struggle—the facts of consciousness. We are not conscious that we are parts of the Supreme Spirit; we are conscious of limitation and imperfection contradictory of our idea of God. These facts the Hindus too acknowledge; but ‘so much the worse for the facts;’ they are the effects of *MĀYĀ*. And what is *Maya*? This it is very difficult to explain. It means properly illusion or delusion. It is an attempt to explain the consciousness of man and the existence of an external world, in accordance with the sole existence of God and the principle—nothing from nothing. They say that the visible universe is a projection of the spirit, as the shadow is the projection of the pillar, or the figure on the screen the projection of the picture in the magic lantern. They attribute to it two effects—enveloping the soul, which gives rise to the conceit of personality; and projecting the appearance of a world, which the individual imagines to be external to himself. Spirit thus invested or deluded is what the universe consists of.

This abstract speculation will be better understood by means of a simile which the Hindus often employ. They say that the world is just like a dream. We fall asleep; we imagine things to be about us which are only the creations of the brain, but which have for us all the value of realities; we wake up and find that they are all a delusion. So shall we one day wake up and find that all the



external universe, which we now imagine to be about us, has been but the play of our spirit, and has vanished 'like the baseless fabric of a vision.'

A pundit, who had some acquaintance with English literature, quoted to me the following incident, which I had previously read, as a proof of the truth of the Hindu theory :—' A man was once labouring under the influence of a mania that he was so enormously swollen that he could not pass through an ordinary door. Some of his friends tried to persuade him that he was quite able to do so, but he listened to them very much as if they had been trying to persuade him to go through the keyhole. At last they thought the best way to convince him he was wrong was to pull him through, and this they did, notwithstanding his struggles and screams. When he had been got through in this way, he fell down in an agony, as if he had been bruised all over, and died from the effects on his mind.' The door evidently did not appear the same to him as to his friends ; but what right have we to explain it by his madness ? The Hindus maintain that it is all delusion, and the practical effect on the unfortunate madman showed that his delusion was real enough for him.

Meanwhile spirit is under the influence of this Maya or illusion, and it is therefore subject to conditions or qualities.<sup>1</sup> As to what these conditions are, they fall back for explanation on an earlier philosophy—the SANKHYA, which accounts for the creation of the world by an eternal PRAKRITI, which

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<sup>1</sup> Gun.

modern European philosophers would probably translate by 'cosmic vapour.' It, in fact, means matter, but the Vedantists have discovered it to be really a delusion, though practically a reality. It is supposed to consist of an equipoise of three conditions or qualities—INTELLIGENCE, PASSION, and DARKNESS, or indifference.<sup>1</sup> Where intelligence prevails, we have such beings as men; where passion or foulness prevails, such beings as the lower animals; and where darkness or indifference prevails, such beings as trees and stones. The Spirit or Self,<sup>2</sup> imprisoned in all these, is the same with the Supreme Spirit, and the final end of it is to be freed from all, and identified with its parent source. After this liberation man must consciously strive. Thus the Hindus, groping after the same truth as that expressed by Paul, 'The whole *creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,'<sup>3</sup> have changed it into, 'The whole *Creator* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the liberation, to wit, *redemption from the body.*'

It might seem that at the time of death, when the spirit quits the body, it will be free to join the Supreme. But call it by what names they chose, illusion or eternal matter, the same problems of the world—joy and sorrow unequally meted, vice prosperous and virtue oppressed—faced the Brahmanical philosophers which faced Buddha, and for them they could give no better solution than he—the TRANSMIGRATION of the soul. They

<sup>1</sup> Sat, Raj, Tamas.<sup>2</sup> Atman.<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 22.

argue for this partly on the same grounds that Plato does, namely, that all knowledge is reminiscence, and that what we call instinct in a child, leading it, for instance, to take its mother's milk, is but a recollection of what it has learned in a previous existence. But the great argument is the moral one, that we are moral and responsible beings. We commit deeds which merit reward or punishment; happiness and misery in this life are not proportioned to the good and evil deeds of each individual. We see babes, who have done neither good nor evil in this life, born some to plenty and some to poverty; some surrounded with every temptation to sin, and with an inherent proclivity towards evil, others surrounded with every influence for good, and with a natural leaning to virtue and uprightness. Hence they conclude that there must be another life, in which present inequalities are redressed, and a past life, by which present inequalities have been caused.

The idea of vicarious atonement has in one form or another found a place in nearly all systems of religion, certainly in all earlier systems. The instinctive feeling of man, that sin places him in opposition to God and must be punished, found refuge first of all in sacrifice, in which, as we have seen, the principle of vicarious atonement had a place. But this left many of the mysteries of Providence unexplained; how, for instance, sufferings that could apparently not be traced to any cause were to be accounted for, how sacrifice might be attained by some and not by others. This the

Hindus account for by saying that men are now reaping the fruit of what they themselves have done in a previous life, though from the effects of Maya they are ignorant of it. They thus try to reconcile the principle of natural justice—that every one should suffer for his own deeds—with the principle of vicarious atonement, which seems man's instinctive refuge from the mysterious inequalities and consciousness of sin in the present life. We suffer for what we ourselves have done, but the deeds for which we suffer are deeds which we are not conscious of having done. We are not recompensed for what we are doing now, but we shall be recompensed in a future birth. This brings us to the second bond of the spirit, according to Hindu philosophy, that which binds it within its first bond, the chain which prevents its escaping the prison-house of illusion—Deeds, or KARMA. This is a conception with which, as we have seen, Buddha dowered India. Hindu philosophy has adopted it, though it has endeavoured, with only partial success, to depose it from the supreme place which he gave it.

A pundit with whom I had once occasion to discuss the subject used the following illustration: 'We are bound to our existence,' he said, 'by two chains, the one a golden chain and the other an iron chain. The golden chain is virtue, and the iron chain is vice. We perform virtuous deeds, and we must exist in order to receive their reward; we perform vicious deeds, and we must exist in order to receive their punishment. The golden

chain is pleasanter than the iron one, but both are fetters, and from both should we seek to free our spirit.' This comparison is a good illustration both of the principles and of the spirit of Hinduism. All action, whether good or bad, binds us, and there is an aim to be sought beyond happiness. If a man of low rank discharges his duty aright, he may in his next birth be a king. If a king rules well, and especially uses his power in the promotion of religion, he may in his next state be born in heaven, and spend thousands of ages there. That might be a state to be desired if there were any certainty of its permanence, but in it he may at any moment commit a slip, or he may unconsciously, in a previous birth, have been guilty of a sin still unexpiated, which will require his being born again in the form of a demon, an animal, or one of the lower castes. There is no security of rest till the spirit is delivered from the idea of its own personality.

The Hindus try to explain this to themselves by another simile, and with them a simile has all the force of an argument.<sup>1</sup> They say: Spirit is one as water is one; but some water may be drawn up from the ocean in the form of vapour; then it may become a cloud; then fall on the earth in the form of rain; be absorbed by some plant and become its sap, be exhaled from it again to be absorbed in another, and so on, changing from form to form, till at last it may fall into some river and find its way to the ocean. In this figure the ocean will repre-

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, Hindu Logic.

sent the Supreme, Free Spirit, and the other conditions of water, Spirit in connection with matter or illusion. When any portion of the Supreme Spirit is, as it were, exhaled, and comes under the power of illusion, it must pass through men and animals, through gods and devils, through trees and rivers, and even stones—always when it quits one body, being forced by the deeds which it may have committed in that, or in some previous body, to enter another, in order to receive their recompense. So it must continue its devious path, ignorant of whence it has come and whither it is going, till the full tale of appointed births, said to be eighty-four lakhs, or eighty-four hundred thousand, is completed. Then its good and evil deeds may be fully atoned for by its joys and sorrows, the spirit may regain its origin, be emancipated from matter, and free to rejoin the Supreme. But the Hindus have also a vague hope that they may not need to endure all this; that they may find a clue out of this interminable labyrinth of births; that they may find a direct passage, as it were, to the Supreme, and be freed from the necessity of being again born either for joy or for sorrow. This is what they mean when they say that ‘Liberation is to cut short the eighty-four.’

Thus far the Hindu system has developed itself with a certain logic. But two testing questions naturally occur here: What led any portion of spirit to come under the power of illusion? and, According to what law do these transmigrations take place?

To the first of these questions the Hindus give some such answer as this: The Supreme Spirit was one, and he thought, 'I will become many.' There is here a certain recognition of supreme will, but if asked again what led him to wish to become many, they are silent, and allow that there is something there for which they cannot account.

The second question,—What is the principle which requires certain deeds to be followed by certain births? what is the power that binds spirit by the bond of deeds to ignorance and illusion?—is a question which Hindu philosophy has felt the need of facing. In this it has gone a step beyond Buddhism. It has recognised that if in Karma there is a power to bind man to conscious existence, and to regulate the nature of that existence, it must be derived. But it has taken this step only to find the darkness more intense. The only explanation it can give of the power inherent in deeds is *ADRIKHTA*, the Unseen;<sup>1</sup> corresponding to what in modern European philosophy is the Unknown

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<sup>1</sup> Even God is powerless in presence of *Adrishta*, according to this philosophy. 'God being dependent creates this world of inequalities. If you ask on what is He dependent? we reply, He is dependent on Merit and Demerit. That there should be an unequal creation of the merit and demerit of the souls created is no fault of God. God is to be looked upon as the rain. As the rain is the common cause of the production of the rice and wheat, but of their specific distinctions as rice and wheat the causes are the varying powers of their respective seeds; so is God the common cause in the production of men, gods, and others, but of the distinctions between gods, men, and others, the causes are the varying works inherent in the varying souls.'—Sankaracharya, quoted in Bannerjea's *Hindu Philosophy*.



and Unknowable. By intellectual analysis it has resolved the Buddhist Karma into its visible effects, or deeds; and its invisible cause, the Unseen. It escapes from atheism by agnosticism. But not the less has it to confess itself baffled, and at last, along with Buddha and the Vedic poets, to erect its altar to the Unknown God.

And how is Liberation to be obtained? How are these eighty-four hundred thousand births to be cut short? It might seem that as there was a Power beyond their ken, which ultimately ordered all, it would be wiser for the philosophers to confess their own inability to discover what It had ordained as the final mode of escape. But the Brahmans have here a better foundation to go on than the Buddhists—they profess to believe in a revelation, however inconsistently, and however little their method may be found in the books which they receive as inspired. Liberation is not to be attained by virtuous life or by works of any kind. Bad works require to be punished and good ones to be rewarded. We must seek a higher end—deliverance from pain and pleasure alike—and look for it by nobler means, by being free from works altogether. Knowledge<sup>1</sup> is the instrument, meditation<sup>2</sup> the means, by which our spirit is to be freed. To avoid all contact with the world, to avoid distraction, to avoid works, and to meditate on the identity of the internal with the external spirit till their oneness be realised, is the ‘way of salvation’ prescribed by the higher Hinduism. The following are

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<sup>1</sup> Gyān.

<sup>2</sup> Dhyān.



the words of one of their principal authorities:<sup>1</sup>—‘The recluse, pondering the teacher’s words, “Thou art the Supreme Being,” and receiving the text of the Vedas, “I am God,” having thus in three several ways—by the teacher’s precept, by the Word of God, by his own contemplation—persuaded himself “I am God,” obtains liberation.’ This is the Hindu philosophical answer to the question, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ It is called the ‘way of knowledge,’<sup>2</sup> and is said to be the highest and only infallible way; the other ways, at which we shall have to look, being supposed to conduce to it.

Such is a brief outline—little more, in fact, than an indication—of Hindu philosophy, yet sufficiently full to enable us to understand how it has affected Hindu society and Hindu religion. It will be seen that, in many of its aspects, it differs but little from Buddhism. It may indeed be called a pantheistic protest against it. It is an attempt to supply the void which the absence of all idea of God occasioned in the rival system. It thus supplies a solution of man’s problem more agreeable to human nature than Buddhism does. It is pleasanter to think of the inner *I* as eternally existent, coming from the Supreme Spirit and destined to return to It again, than to think of it as destined to ultimate annihilation. It also supplies after a fashion a basis for worship, as we shall see by and by, and thus helps to fulfil a craving of man’s soul. But it

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<sup>1</sup> Sankaracharya, Bannerjea’s *Hindu Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup> Gyān Mārg—Knowledge way.

shows how nearly pantheism and atheism, the 'all god' and the 'no god,' meet. The immortality of Hinduism differs but little from the annihilation of Buddhism, for it is an annihilation of that individualism and self-consciousness apart from which man can hardly conceive of his own existence. Yet it enables the Brahmans to charge the Buddhists with atheism, and to call their own system theistic as opposed to it. In other respects—especially the doctrine of transmigration of souls, the way of knowledge, the employment of meditation—it is liker a rival than an antagonist. It may perhaps be said that of the two Hinduism is the more logically consistent, while Buddhism supplies the better rules of life. Buddhism forbids the sinful craving after existence, but enjoins working for the good of others. Hinduism teaches that this too is a fetter to existence, and that work of all kinds should be relinquished for meditation. Hinduism is thus more logical than Buddhism, because both have departed from the truth, but Hinduism has only gone a step further than its rival.

Had the Brahmans, in carrying out their principles, been as consistent as the Buddhists, it is probable that they too would have perished from Hindustan, as at one time seemed not unlikely. So long as they confined themselves to abstract teaching the Brahmanical power made no progress. At last they united it with the popular superstitions, and rallied the various tribes of India around them, though to this day there are some which

have escaped their influence, and which they are now seeking to attach to themselves.

It will be seen that the system which I have tried to describe is not very far removed from many European pantheistic systems, though possibly it is more consistently logical than they are. It will be seen also that, in its ultimate principles, there are two points on which it joins issue with Christianity—one metaphysical and the other ethical. The metaphysical difference is that Hinduism teaches the impersonality, while Christianity teaches the personality of God. The ethical difference consequent on the former is, that while Christianity makes good an essential, Hinduism makes it an accident, classing it along with evil as a bond to the spirit. These seem to me to be the two great antagonistic principles of the two systems in their most philosophical aspects; and if we examine their practical developments, we shall find this antagonism only more clearly brought out. And as, after all, practical results are the best test of any system, an examination of the practical popular developments of Hinduism will be the most conclusive demonstration of the falsity of its higher doctrines. Let us, then, look at the effects which they have on the society and the popular religion of the Hindus.

But, before proceeding to this, one question remains to be answered, Is the account I have given of Hindu philosophy a description of the

belief of all Hindus, or of the learned only? I have stated it as I have heard it explained by the more learned pundits and read it in their books on the subject, and the reader may imagine all the different stages of acquaintance with and belief in it down to the utmost ignorance. The following tenets I have found held generally by all classes of Hindus.

The transmigration of souls is universally accepted. Every Hindu that I have met with believes that he has previously inhabited other bodies, and that he must again tenant others after quitting his present one.

Deeds are looked on as the power binding him to his existence, causing his present condition, and even forcing him to his present action. The Buddhist explanation is the popular one, that of Hindu philosophy—the Unseen being set aside by the common people, as negations usually are. If I were to translate the word *Karma* by *fate*, instead of *deeds*, it would perhaps be more intelligible. But the European fatalist looks on himself as impelled by a power altogether external to himself, which, while it deprives him of liberty, excuses him at the same time from responsibility. The Hindu looks on himself as impelled by what he himself has previously done, as reaping the fruit of his own deeds, though not deeds of his present consciousness. Thus a dreadful sense of retribution and responsibility is superadded to that of helplessness, making it tenfold more gloomy and terrible. The full force of this can be understood only by one

who has seen a Hindu under sentence of death for a heinous crime, and who, to all appeals to his conscience and responsibility, can only reply by a stolid '*Karm.*' His crime and his punishment alike are the fruit of deeds done, he knows not when or where. How can he escape ?

Lastly, nearly all Hindus believe more or less that their inner self—that which passes from body to body—is the Deity. When I have asked a Hindu 'Who is God?' the answer I have received about as often as any other, and from peasant as well as priest, is, '*Jo bole*'—he who speaks. It is possible he may never have thought of the meaning of this answer, but it shows how deeply the pantheistic principle has penetrated into Hindu thought, when even the most uneducated define the Deity as that within them which gives them the power of thought and consequent utterance. The same idea is shown by the words used by many castes in performing the last rites for the dead. As the body is borne along to be burned, the bearers and mourners unite in the chant—

' Ram, Ram sat hai ;  
Jo bole gat hai.'

' Ram Ram (God) is existent: he who speaks is passed.' This is their creed of immortality. Man perishes, but God is ever existent. The body dies and is burned, but not so 'he who speaks'—he has only passed on another step towards his supreme source. Hence the word *gati*, or passing—the final passing into God—is the popular word for emancipation or salvation.

But when the question came to be, What were the multitude to do to obtain salvation? the philosophical solution, the 'way of knowledge,' failed altogether. For every one to become a recluse, to abandon the world, and to devote himself to meditation, would have been to destroy the faith, by causing all who received it to perish from the face of the earth. It was, besides, utterly opposed to human nature, and especially opposed to the Brahmanical supremacy, as it involved the sinking of all caste distinctions. The Brahmans, therefore, left the various tribes and castes to seek salvation by their own way, and sought to gain them rather by showing how their various ways practically led to the same result which recluses attained by severest meditation. Thus the various popular gods and demons, idols and fetiches, which the proud 'twice-born' had so long ignored, at last rose up in power to avenge themselves on the Brahmans, by debasing their high creed to the lowest idolatry and to the vilest worship; while, at the same time, the lowest orders of Sudras obtained a recognition and a place in the caste system. This union of pantheism with caste and polytheism we now proceed to consider.

## CHAPTER V.

### PANTHEISM AND CASTE.

THE great vitality of Hinduism lies in its institution of caste. I have already had occasion to speak of it more than once, but a fuller explanation of its leading principles will be necessary to enable us to understand its nature and power. Caste, then, is an institution to preserve purity of tribe and class by preserving purity of blood. The most obvious way to preserve this is by preventing inter-marriage. Accordingly, all the castes of India are endogamous—they marry only within themselves, beyond certain degrees of relationship, varying in different castes. This might be considered sufficient to secure the desired end, but eating and drinking also affects the blood. Members of one caste must not, therefore, eat or drink with those of another—must not eat food that has been cooked or touched by them; and some even go so far as to believe their food polluted if one of another caste comes near it while it is being cooked. Some of the lower castes are considered so unclean that contact with their shadows is regarded as pollution by the higher castes; and in Hindu states these castes are not allowed to enter cities at morning or

evening, when the sun is low in the heavens, and their bodies cast long shadows. It is no uncleanness, however, for those of lower castes to come into contact with the higher. All may eat food prepared by Brahmans, and drink water from their vessels. Some castes of Brahmans even take wives from the lower castes, in which case the offspring are considered to belong to the mother's family; but Brahmans who do this generally marry one wife of their own caste in order to preserve it.

Besides these rules about eating and drinking, each caste has its peculiar occupation and peculiar customs. Barbers constitute one caste, carpenters another, iron-founders a third, brassfounders a fourth, and so on. Some have, indeed, a wider range of occupation. Brahmans may be priests or soldiers, beggars or teachers. Rajputs may be farmers or servants as well as soldiers, but there are always some occupations which it is forbidden them to enter on. This community of occupation is thus another bond to bind together members of one caste, and to draw a distinction between them and the rest of society.

But the full strength of the caste system cannot be rightly appreciated without taking into account the family system of the Hindus. Its tendency is completely to annihilate individuality. The Hindu child finds himself in a family consisting of grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, and cousins to the second or third degree. His grandfather, or possibly his grandfather's elder brother, is the head of the family, and when he dies he is succeeded by



his younger brother, or the eldest of the second generation. He finds that he has been betrothed ere he could understand anything about it, or when he is seven or eight years old the head of the family chooses a wife for him, and the betrothal takes place with great rejoicings. Among his sisters is one to whom he may not give any present, and who may not wear any ornament. She was betrothed when an infant; her husband died when she was a few years old: she is now a widow, looked on as branded with a curse, and must continue the disgrace and reproach of her family to the day of her death. He hears of nothing but the affairs of his caste; he looks forward to no career but assisting his father and uncles in their trade or profession; and when he gains anything it does not belong to him individually, but is thrown into the common income of the family. When he is seventeen or eighteen he takes his wife to his father's house, as his elder brothers have done before him, and a new branch is added to the family. He performs religious ceremonies at his father's death, others a year after, and at least once thereafter he must perform a pilgrimage to some sacred stream or lake, to burn the *pind*<sup>1</sup> to his father's manes. As his grandfather, father, and uncles, elder brothers, or father's elder brothers' sons die,—for all these relationships

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<sup>1</sup> A large leaf is bent up into a shape like a boat. This is filled with *ghi*, or clarified butter; a wick is inserted into it, and lighted. The frail bark is then, with certain invocations, set to float on the waters, and if the devotee can fancy that in its sudden extinction he sees the hand of the dead grasping it and taking it to the invisible world, he feels that all is well.

are attended to and distinguished by separate names in India,—he floats on to the patriarchate of the family, to look after the duties and marriages of the younger members. Thus throughout his whole life there is no room for any play of individuality. His whole course is marked out for him by the lines of inexorable custom ; he cannot disentangle himself from family ties, much less break loose from caste fetters.

We have already seen how caste may have originated, and we have seen how Buddha sought to overthrow it. He taught, as a consequence of his doctrine of transmigration and final extinction, that all men were equal, and caste, therefore, a sin. But it had struck its roots too deeply into society to be speedily eradicated, and when the Brahmans sought to regain their power, they turned Buddha's own doctrines, or rather, their modification of them, into an argument in its favour, and thereby of establishing their own supremacy. For, they say, just as a man's deeds in his former life may have led to his being born a god or a demon, or an animal, so they have led to his being born a Brahman, a warrior, or a sweeper. There is this disadvantage in having been born a man, that, having freedom of judgment and action, he may leave the duties appropriate to his own caste and discharge those of some other ; he may quit the society of his own people, and eat and drink with others. But so surely as he acts thus he is involving himself in some miserable birth in the future—he is forging a new link in the iron chain of his existence.

If a man is born in the highest caste, for instance, that of a Brahman, the Hindus believe that it is on account of merit acquired in a previous birth. If a Brahman should quit his appropriate duty—if he should seek to gain his food by manual labour rather than by begging, by merchandise rather than by teaching; if, above all, he should mingle socially, eat and drink with the lower castes, or teach the sacred books to the out-castes, he is leaving some of his merit not fully rewarded; he must undergo another birth in order to receive its full reward, and, meanwhile, he is committing a sin which will necessitate his being yet again born in some miserable condition, that expiation may be made for it.

And as it was for themselves, so the Brahmans taught it was for every man. Whatever the condition in which he was born, it had been determined by his previous deeds; he could expiate them only by fulfilling the duties of that condition, but, by fulfilling them aright, he could gain a step towards future bliss as surely as the Brahmans. Thus the Brahmans no longer ignored the Sudras; they recognised them by teaching that they too were bound by the same order of things, and that by accepting and obeying that order they could in future births rise to be their equals or superiors. But on two points the Brahmans always insisted: first, that they must be acknowledged as the supreme caste—served, worshipped, and fed as gods on earth; and, second, that the cow must be preserved, revered, and worshipped as a sacred animal. Each tribe or family or trade among the Sudras

was glad to accept this condition, and to have its respectability and importance in the social system increased by its being recognised as a distinct caste. Thus they were one after the other attached to the Brahmanical system, and instead of the four old castes we have now writers, carpenters, iron workers, brass workers, barbers, and others, too numerous to mention; each with its old customs, its rules of eating and drinking, marriage and social intercourse, erected into sacred duties. Many of the lower castes are now much greater sticklers for caste customs and privileges than are the Brahmans.

Two consequences flowed from this—the breaking-up of the Brahmans into various castes, and the disappearance of the two intermediate castes. The Brahmans are now broken up into numerous sub-castes, which refuse to intermarry or eat and drink with one another. Each of these has generally its separate clients in one of the lower castes. The distinctive character of some is determined by the place of their origin and their sacrificial duties. It would be vain to attempt here any description of all the distinctions that exist among them, so I merely indicate the principles on which these distinctions proceed.<sup>1</sup> But a more important result of this movement was the disappearance of the warrior and mercantile castes as such. Many of the present

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to say what constitutes a Brahman. The Pushkara Brahmans are said to be descended from a Mer—one of the aboriginal tribes of India—who was taught the Atharva Veda by a recluse in return for certain services he performed. This would seem as if the possession of a Veda gave the right to Brahmanical distinction.

mercantile castes do indeed claim to be descendants of the old Vaisyas, and the Rajputs claim to be descendants of the old Kshatriyas or warriors. But the Brahmans refuse this claim, or allow it only where it is politic in them to do so. In Rajputana, where the Rajputs rule, they are acknowledged as the second caste, but in Gujerat they are looked on as inferior to many others. On the other hand, the Kayaths, or writers, who do the principal business in the courts in the North-West Provinces, and who are therefore much more useful to the Brahmans there than the Rajputs, obtained some time ago a declaration from a Brahmanical college in Benares that they are not ordinary Sudras, but are sprung from the warrior caste. But this does not imply any restoration to those privileges of intercourse with the Brahmans themselves, or to that degree of intermarriage with them that was allowed to the Kshatriyas in the code of Manu. The general state of Hindu society may now be described as being divided into two great castes—the Brahmans or twice-born, who are worshipped as gods, and the once-born, who worship them, and who constitute the great mass of the people.

Meanwhile, I trust I have exhibited with sufficient clearness how pantheistic doctrine has been allied to caste practice. It may be conceived what an iron hold universal custom, backed up by such doctrine, has on the minds of the people. Accordingly, we find that the Hindus pay much more attention to the law of caste than to the law of

conscience. A Brahman may be guilty of theft, adultery, or murder, and he will yet be received without hesitation by his caste fellows. But let him be guilty of eating and drinking with those of another caste—let forbidden meat cross his lips, even though this be by no fault of his own, but by violence having been forced upon him, and he then becomes an out-caste, with whom it is pollution to eat, drink, or have any dealings. Caste, in some of its features, is fast being obliterated, as we shall see in considering modern changes in Hinduism; but there are, I suspect, few Hindus who would not shun one of their own caste who had eaten with those of another, much more than they would shun one who had been convicted of a heinous crime.

The following is a picture given by a native reforming journal, the *Indu Prakash*, of the tyranny of caste. It was written apropos of the refusal of one caste to allow one of its number to go to England:—

‘The prohibition to go to England is the least of our complaints against the tyranny of caste. Does a Brahman wish to marry his daughter at a mature and properly marriageable age? There comes the tyrant caste, and says, “You shall not keep your daughter unmarried beyond the age of eight or ten, unless you choose to incur the penalty of excommunication.” Does a man wish to countenance either by deed or by word the marriage of little girls plunged into life-long misery and degrading widowhood? Caste says, “No, you will be excommunicated.” Does a Brahman wish to dine with a man of another caste? However thick friends they may be of one another, caste says, “No, you must not do that, or you will be excommunicated.” Does a man wish to dispense with any of the unmeaning idolatrous ceremonies with which Native society is hampered? Caste says, “No, or

you will be excommunicated." Does a man wish to dispense with silk cloth and wear ordinary clothes at the time of meals? Caste says, "No, or you will be excommunicated." If a Brahman feels thirsty and has no other water but such as is brought by a Sudra near him, he cannot drink it; for caste forbids it on the pain of excommunication. Why, the tyranny of caste extends from the most trifling to the most important affairs of Hindu life. It cripples the independent action of individuals, sows the seed of bitter discord between the different sections of society, encourages the most abominable practices, and dries up all the springs of that social, moral, and intellectual freedom which alone can secure greatness, whether to individuals or to nations. It has pampered the pride and insolence of the Brahmans, by teaching them to look upon themselves, notwithstanding all their weaknesses, as the favourites of gods, nay, the very gods on earth, who are to keep the lower orders in a state of utter degradation and illiterate servitude. Such is our caste system; so unjustifiable in principle, so unfair in organisation, and so baneful in its consequences to the highest interests of the country.' -

One other effect of caste I would notice, the gap that it has opened between the English and the Hindus. Englishmen in this country often reproach their countrymen in India with the antagonism, the enmity, the total want of sympathy that seems to exist between them and the natives. It is a sad fact that such a feeling does exist, but it is the natives who are mainly responsible for it. It is they who have made friendly social intercourse between the rulers and ruled impossible. Governed as they are by the English, owning their sway, and acknowledging that it is a just one, they yet look down on them as unclean. It is the Hindu who looks on himself as polluted by the touch of an Englishman, who will throw away his food as unfit for being



eaten, if an Englishman comes within a few feet of it while it is being cooked; not the Englishman who looks on himself as polluted by the touch of the Hindu. This has, no doubt, reacted on the English, and produced in their mind a feeling of dislike and antagonism to the Hindus; but the original blame lies with the latter.

Not only has the system of caste thus riveted Hinduism on the Hindus, but it also gives facilities to the Brahmans for gaining over those of the aborigines who are still outside the pale of Hinduism. Whenever they undertake the conversion of any tribe, the first lesson they teach them is, that they must continue performing the customs of their tribe as sacred duties—as duties to which they are bound by their previous births, attending in addition to those relative duties which are the result of their new position, especially worshipping the holy Brahman and reverencing the holy cow. When these points have been acceded to, they are raised out of the position of out-castes and become part of the Hindu system, enforcing with all the zeal of neophytes the old customs and the new privileges and duties.

*The Worship of the Cow the Sacrament of Caste.*

I have mentioned as one of the duties imposed on all Hindus the reverencing of the cow. This is, in fact, the only common bond of union for all castes. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to name anything else that commands the assent of



all. Some castes worship one god and some another, some have Brahmans for their priests and some have priests of other castes ; but, in whatever they disagree, on one point they agree, and that is in considering the cow a sacred animal, and in looking to the attainment of ceremonial purity through it. It is the sacramental symbol of Hinduism in which sectaries of all shades unite. The formal acknowledging of its sanctity is the act by which an aboriginal tribe is erected into a caste and received within the pale of Hinduism ; just as receiving baptism is the act by which any one is received into the Christian Church. The bullock-driver whose clothes have been defiled by contact with a sweeper will rub the polluted part on the nose of his bullock, and thus restore himself to purity. The Brahman who has lost caste may be restored to it by taking the sacred pills composed of the five products of the cow.<sup>1</sup> As far as I have noticed, however, it is only for the conservation of caste and purity that it is thus honoured. The Hindus do not pray to it, or seek temporal and spiritual blessings from it, as they do from their idols.

The origin and growth of this idea it is difficult to trace. It is probable that even in ante-Vedic times, before the worshippers of fire had separated from the worshippers of Varuna and Indra, a certain reverence was attached to the bull or cow. The Parsees in Bombay preserve a sacred white bull in

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<sup>1</sup> Viz. milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung. Notices sometimes appear in the newspapers of Hindus who have visited this country undergoing purification, of which ceremony partaking a compost of these five elements forms a part !

one of their fire temples, and the whole of Parseedom was some time since thrown into consternation by the announcement that its tail had been cut off during the night by some mischievous rascal. This recalls the worship of Apis in Egypt. We must remember, too, that Assyrian sculptures show the bull to have been recognised as a sacred animal in Nineveh and Babylon. These lands were quite likely in communication with the land of the Aryas before they turned towards India, as they were afterwards with those who remained in their original abode.

We need not, however, look to any abstruse origin of the worship. We can imagine how with a pastoral people the cow would come to be looked on with a certain degree of sacredness, especially when they also became an agricultural and more civilised people, and used the same animal for drawing the plough and pulling their carts and chariots. We can imagine, too, how it would come poetically to symbolise other things. In some of the Puranas—the more modern religious books of the Hindus—an ancient legend is referred to, telling how the earth at first gave its products with difficulty, and how a certain great king called Prithu, having made a great sage the calf before it—*Scotice* tulchan—obtained milk from it. This was probably originally a simple allegory to express that the ‘rugged, all-nourishing earth,’ Prithivi, supplied food to those who wrought it, as the cow supplied milk to those who milked it. Ultimately the cow came to be the symbol of the earth, and the bull, of religion. But this for a long time did not seem to imply any

sacredness in the whole genus. In the Vedas the cow is spoken of as used both for sacrifice and for food, and is praised as the best of all food. In the chapter of Manu's Institutes relating to assault, the cow is classed with other large animals. 'For killing a man (unintentionally) a fine equal to that for theft shall instantly be set—half that amount for large brute animals, as for a bull or cow, an elephant, a camel, or a horse.'<sup>1</sup> In the chapter on penance, which is evidently much later, the cow occupies an intermediate position between man and other animals, and killing<sup>2</sup> it is classed along with adultery and other crimes as a sin of the third degree, to be expiated by a long and heavy penance. In it too we find the five products of the cow prescribed as a means of ceremonial purification.

When once this start had been made we can easily conceive how the idea grew. The Buddhists might oppose to the reverence which the Brahmans paid to the cow the care which they took of all animals, might ridicule them for their attention to one in particular, and call on them for reasons for their preference. The cow would thus come to be identified with the existence of the Brahmanical religion. At all events, when the Rajputs conquered the Buddhists, the cow was for them the symbol of triumph. In the temples erected to celebrate the victory of Hinduism over Buddhism, a bull is represented as standing on a prostrate Buddha. In later ages, when they again struggled with the Mohammedans, and expelled them from

<sup>1</sup> Manu, viii. 296.<sup>2</sup> Manu, xi. 109.

Rajputana, the point which the chronicler always notices, when he records the triumphs of a Rajput prince, is that he put a stop to the slaughter of kine. There is no article in their treaties with the British Government on which modern Hindu princes insist more strenuously than that prohibiting the slaughter of kine within their territories. It is a crime on which they now look as much greater than that of murder. About the year 1865, the regent of one of the native states having adjudged a man guilty of this crime, punished him by having him tied to the foot of an elephant and dragged about till he was dead—an act for which he was deprived of the regency by the British Government, but for which he had the sympathy of all good Hindus.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PANTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM.

REVERENCE of the cow is the common characteristic of all Hindu castes, but, as I have said, it is not the object of adoration and worship in the way of seeking temporal or spiritual benefits. The Hindus do not look to it for deliverance from sickness or misfortune, for success in business or for 'cutting through the eighty-four,' for obtaining future happy births or for final deliverance. For these they look to their various gods and idols. Each caste has its own gods, sometimes the same as those of other castes, though perhaps originally different. We have seen that it is probable that, during the supremacy of Buddhism, the people resorted to their various gods and fetiches in those conjunctures of life where they found the atheism of that system insufficient. When the Brahmans tried to reconquer India, they allied their religion with those aboriginal deities which Buddhism had not availed to overthrow. They thus strengthened their own influence, and formed what may be more appropriately termed the Hindu than the Brahmanical religion, as it embraces elements to which all castes of Hindus have contributed.

We are thus brought face to face with the countless gods of Hinduism—the thirty-three of the Vedas having swelled to thirty-three crores, or three hundred and thirty millions. It may seem at first to be somewhat contradictory to the doctrine of there being one Supreme Spirit, that the worship of so many gods should be admitted, and that, if we are ourselves parts of the Supreme Spirit, we should be required to worship other parts. But pantheism cannot conquer fetichism any more than atheism can, while it does what atheism does not, supplies a philosophic basis for such worship. There is a complete logic running through the various parts of the Hindu system, never indeed formally expressed, in so far as I have known, but indefinitely present to the minds of its votaries—welding it into a consistent whole.

The position which these popular deities occupy with regard to the Supreme may be understood by recurring to the image of water, which I used to illustrate the theory of transmigration. A drop of water may be far away from the ocean, and it may be impossible for it to return thither directly. Nevertheless, if it fall into a stream, its own existence will, so to speak, be absorbed in that of the stream till it reaches the ocean. So, too, are we by our connection with ignorance and illusion hopelessly far away from the Supreme Spirit. By no effort of our own can we hope to overcome this separation, but these gods are, like the rivers, brought nearer to us. They are themselves under the power of *Maya*—the illusion of the universe—

as we ourselves are. Hence they have desires and passions similar to ours. They can be influenced by motives and considerations as we are, can be induced to grant temporal and spiritual blessings, to aid our being introduced into a happy state when we are again born, or, best of all, in certain cases, can grant us mediate liberation by absorbing us into themselves. We then lose existence except as part of them, the burden of merit or demerit which may attach to us is borne by the deity who may absorb us, and so we shall continue till the final cataclysm, when all shall be absorbed in the universal Brahm. The Hindus thus, quite consistently with their own system, attach themselves to the worship of their inferior deities, while, for the most part, neglecting that of the Supreme.

We thus see how pantheism supplies a basis for idolatrous worship. Buddhism taught that the gods were subject to the same laws as men, and, having no Supreme Spirit to which to refer them, forbade their worship altogether, and thus afforded no outlet for a craving of man's nature. Hinduism, admitting the gods to be subject to the same laws as men, yet referring them to the Supreme Spirit, made them mediators leading to It. Their very weaknesses and subjection to laws make worshipping them more reasonable than worshipping It; for they can be influenced by motives while It cannot, and can thus be brought under the power of their worshipper, though he may be weaker than they. This apparent contradiction again the Hindus explain by a simile. One man may be much more powerful than another,

inasmuch as he may be richer; but the poor man may go to him at night, and, putting a pistol to his breast, force him to part with some of his riches. So the gods are more powerful than we are; but at the same time we, by certain acts of worship, may bring them under our control, and force them to grant whatever we desire.

Such principles as these offered great facilities to the Brahmans for adapting to their own system the various gods and worships with which they came into contact. When they met any idol that was worshipped by any tribe, they had only to represent it as one of the many streams leading into the ocean of Liberation, needing only to be worshipped in the way in which its devotees had been wont to worship it.

But there are two great streams in which the current of religious thought has flowed in India since the era of Buddhism, the worship of VISHNU and the worship of SIVA, called also HARI and HAR. Those who attach themselves to the former are called VAISHNAVAS; those who attach themselves to the latter are called SAIVAS, and these two great parties include nearly all the modern Hindu sects. The former are distinguished by a *tilak*, or frontal mark, consisting of three perpendicular lines; the latter by a frontal mark of three horizontal lines. There are also various differences in the time they observe fasts, the shape of their temples, the form of their worship, and so forth, with a mere enumeration of which most who have written about Hindu sects are satisfied.



But such external and superficial distinctions could not account for the bitter antagonism that used to exist between the two sects, as is evident from their old sacred books; and which even now breaks out occasionally between them, notwithstanding the reconciliation that has been made, and the essential quietism of modern Hinduism. One must have seen the kindling eye and quickening breath of a Saiva teacher when encountered by a Vaishnava teacher, the violent fury to which the preaching of the former excited a Vaishnava audience,—exceeding anything which Christian teaching produced,—in order to understand the latent hostility that still exists between the two sects. The cause of this must be looked for in the ideas which they respectively represent. They typify two opposite poles of religious thought which have always been found, and must always be found among men—the one, the Vaishnava, looking to God as the Author of all good; the other, the Saiva, looking to man, as by his own deeds attaining to the good he desires. The discussion thus corresponds somewhat to that between the upholders of Free Grace and of Works, which, under the names of Augustinianism and Pelagianism,<sup>1</sup> or Calvinism and Arminianism, has divided the Christian Church. We know what

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<sup>1</sup> 'Some of the Vaishnavas are semi-Pelagians. Those of Madras are divided into two sects, the Vadakalai and the Tenkalai. The adherents of the Vadakalai strongly insist on the *concomitancy of the human will* for securing salvation, whereas those of the Tenkalai maintain the *irresistibility of divine grace* in human salvation. The arguments from analogy used by the two parties are, however, peculiarly Indian in character. The former use

violent animosities, resulting in war and persecution, have existed between these two parties in Christendom, even when they had a common object of worship; and we need not be surprised that, when in India they were symbolised by distinct gods, a similar hostility should be found.

It must not be supposed that the distinction is absolute between the two. On the contrary, the worshippers of each god tried to exalt him and extend his worship by appropriating some of the forms more proper to the other, and thus we find certain traits of Saivism shot through Vaishnavism, and *vice versâ*. The range of controversy is also much narrower than in Europe. The extremest upholder of the efficacy of 'works' in India is as rigid a predestinarian as the extremest Calvinist, inasmuch as he believes his works to have been necessitated by Karma. The firmest Hindu believer in the power of 'faith' looks on it as meriting a recompense from God. Yet these indicate the main principles of the two sects, as will be better understood by a short survey of their historical development.

The sacred books, in which we may trace the progress of these two worships, are called the PURANAS, which may be translated 'Antiquities.'

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what is called *monkey logic* (the *markata nyaya*); for the young monkey holds on to or grasps its mother to be conveyed to safety, and represents the hold of the soul on God. The latter use the *cat logic* (the *marjala nyaya*), which is expressive of the hold of God on the soul; for the kitten is helpless till the mother cat seizes it *nolens volens* and secures it from danger.'—Rev. C. E. Kennet, in *Indian Antiquary*. May 1874.

They constitute the real sacred literature of the great body of Hindus; they embody their actual religious beliefs, and tell about the gods whom they presently worship; while the Vedas are repeated as incomprehensible incantations in that worship, and the deities they extol are forgotten. The Puranas profess to give an account of the various gods, especially Vishnu or Siva, as they belong to the Vaishnava or Saiva sects. They give an account of the creation of the world,—as being produced from Brahma, which they consider a name of Vishnu or Siva, in the character of creator, and they look forward to its being again absorbed into him at the final cataclysm. They give an account of the various ages of the world's history as they conceive it. We find many old legends embodied in them, and can trace the amalgamation of older objects and modes of worship with Brahmanical gods and Brahmanical worship. I will touch only on the most prominent points contained in them, beginning with the worship of Vishnu.

## CHAPTER VII.

### VAISHNAVISM.<sup>1</sup>

IN Vishnu we find typified that form of religious thought which starts from God, and considers Him as the source of man's strength and salvation—that type of pantheistic thought which starts with the idea of God pervading all things. The pundits, indeed, derive his name from a root signifying to pervade, but it has with more probability been traced to one meaning to go forth. It may originally have been a name of the sun, and he was at all events first worshipped as the sun-god. We have seen that he was an old Vedic god who assumed some importance during the Brahmanical period; and in him we can trace the continuity of the old Brahmanical religion preserved in modern Hinduism. We find in his worship and legends the influence of many cross currents of religious thought, such as tree and serpent worship and arkite typology, and many adaptations of the faith and worship of the aboriginal races; but these are blended into a more harmonious whole than in the case of Siva worship.

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<sup>1</sup> A worshipper of Vishnu is called a Vaishnava, and the system which acknowledges Vishnu as its god is called Vaishnavism. So, too, a worshipper of Siva is a Saiva, and his religious system Saivism.

*Avatārs of Vishnu.*—Vishnu is represented as resting in a state of blissful repose on the flood, supported on the great mundane serpent, which raises above him its graceful spreading hood; sometimes it is supposed to be many-headed, and all the heads combine to form one large canopy. Thus reposing he is said to typify the Eternal Spirit, and it is possible that as some such conception the Brahmans originally adored him; but it had too little human sympathy to attract the common people to his worship. He is therefore represented as being occasionally roused out of his slumbers by the solicitations of gods and men, and moved to take interest in the affairs of the world, when something has gone wrong in them. Then he becomes incarnate, or rather, as the Hindu expression means, he takes a descent or AVATĀR. These Avatars form the main features of his history, and it is by means of them that his worship is linked to Hinduism.

These Avatars extend to the Divine life on earth the analogy of man's life. Thus we Christians, believing that man is born but once, believe that God has become incarnate once for man's salvation; the Hindus, believing that man is born many times, believe that Vishnu has become incarnate many times. As they believe that the spirit of man may pass through animals also, so they believe that Vishnu has become incarnate in the bodies of animals. This gave the Brahmans great facilities in dealing with the aboriginal tribes whom they tried to gain over, or with the votaries of other worships which they tried to amalgamate with their

own. They found one tribe that worshipped the FISH (Matsya), and they taught them that the worship was quite right, but was so only if they recognised the fish as Vishnu, who had become incarnate in it. They found another tribe or caste who worshipped the TORTOISE (Kūrma); this they said was also an incarnation of the same god; another that worshipped the BOAR (Varāha); this too was a form in which Vishnu had taken birth. Each tribe was in this way encouraged to exalt its own peculiar deity, but to recognise in it also a manifestation of the one Supreme Spirit; to continue its own worship, and at the same time to correlate it with that of others. This is, I believe, the most probable explanation of the origin of the accounts of the first three incarnations which are attributed to Vishnu. I have found among the Minas traces of fish and boar worship still existing, and it is probable that, before the influence of Brahmanism spread, such worship was more pronounced. We may look on the stories of these incarnations, then, as first of all attempts to gain over some of the aboriginal tribes, though elaborate myths afterwards grew round them. The story of the fish Avatar has many points of resemblance with the story of the flood in Genesis, and has by some been supposed to be a reminiscence of the same event preserved by independent tradition. But there is no trace of its having existed in Hindu tradition earlier than could be accounted for by the first preaching of Christianity in India.

The fourth descent of Vishnu was as a MAN-LION (Nara Sinha), and it had probably an origin similar

to the three previous ones, in an attempt to attach the worshippers of an idol of this form. The fifth descent, that of the DWARF (Vāmana), is more important than any of the preceding, for it links the worship of Vishnu with the pre-Buddhistic worship of the Brahmanas, with the worship of the sun, and with a worship in Southern India. The outline of the myth is this:—A king called Bali had by his austerities gained power over the gods, and at last performed a sacrifice so potent that even Indra lost his sovereignty. The gods appealed to Vishnu to help them. He appeared before the king in the form of a dwarf, and asked as a boon as much land as he could cover in three paces. The king granted his request, whereupon the dwarf enlarged his form so as to fill all space; at one step he put his foot on the earth, at the second on the firmament, and at the third on heaven, so that there was no place left for Bali but Patāla or hell. This myth is a later form of the story of Vishnu's becoming a sacrifice, which, we have seen,<sup>1</sup> had its origin in early times, and was probably the earliest conception of his 'Descent.' In this form, indeed, he appears as the destroyer of sacrifice rather than as a sacrifice itself, but that shows the revolution that had taken place in India with regard to the ideas of sacrifice. In later Hindu literature it is the enemies of the gods who are represented as thus gaining power and threatening their sovereignty, and it was thought more consistent with the divine character for Vishnu to gain his end by deception than by sacrifice—to

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, pp. 30, 31.

make the former defeat the efficacy of the latter. The three steps have been variously explained, but the most obvious and probably the original one is the rise, the meridian, and the setting of the sun,<sup>1</sup> while the introduction of the dwarf probably came from some form of worship in Southern India, where it still survives.<sup>2</sup>

6 With the sixth incarnation we enter on clearly historical ground. We see hero-worship being woven into Hinduism, and the desire of the Brahmans to represent the great events of history as the result of the interference of their god. This time Vishnu is said to have come to the earth as PARASU RĀMA, to extirpate the power of the Kshatriyas and to establish that of the Brahmans.<sup>3</sup> This was not a worship likely to be pleasing to any but the Brahmans, and it was probably not their interest to seek to continue it. At all events few, if any, traces of the worship of Vishnu under this form now exist.

The great Kshatriya or warrior hero was RĀMA CHANDRA,<sup>4</sup> who, with his wife SĪTA and brother LACHMAN, was represented as the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Rāma was the type of manly virtues, as Sita of feminine grace and fidelity,

<sup>1</sup> Two explanations are given :—‘ Vishnu strides over this, whatever exists. He plants his step in a threefold manner, *i.e.* “for a threefold existence, on earth (as fire or Agni), in the atmosphere (as lightning or as wind, Vayu), and in the sky (as the sun, Surya),” according to Sakapuni ; or “on the hill where he rises, on the meridian, and on the hill where he sets,” according to Aurnavabha.’ —Nirukta, xii. 19 ; *Sanskrit Texts*, iv. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Lassen, *Ind. Alt.* iv. 583.

<sup>3</sup> See *ante*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 35. On this occasion one half of Vishnu is said to have been embodied in Rāma, one quarter in Sita, and one quarter in Lachman.



among the Hindus. His character, though not altogether free from blemishes, is one of the best and noblest in history; and it is accordingly to the worship of this incarnation of Vishnu that most reformers among the Vaishnavas, such as Ramanuja and Ramananda, have attached themselves. Under this name he is still worshipped by many powerful sects, such as the Sita Rams and Ramawats, or disciples of Ramananda.

But more important than any of these—the great feature, in fact, of the Brahmanical revival—was the adopting of KRISHNA as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. As it shows all the force and all the vice of this movement, I will dwell on it more in detail. I have already had occasion to refer to Krishna, the ally of the Pandavs<sup>1</sup> in the great war recorded in the Mahabhārat. In the later additions to that poem he is spoken of as a divinity. Traditions about him beyond what are recorded in it were handed down, and were current among the Vaisya and other castes; these, with many exaggerations and accretions, had assumed a definite form, and his worship had taken firm hold on the popular mind, when the Brahmans began to manipulate it for their own purposes. According to the general story, he lived in his youth in Brindaban, a beautiful forest on the banks of the Jumna. He was supposed to be the son of Nanda, a cowherd of the district. He was noted in his boyhood for roguery, theft, and falsehood. As he grew up he performed several feats, among others killing a bull by which he was

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 36.

attacked, now the unpardonable sin of Hinduism. He thereafter entered on a course of open, shameless debauchery—the part of his history most often celebrated in story and song. When he had grown up he slew Kansa, king of Mathura, and ruled there for some time; but he was attacked by Jarasandh, the king of Magadh, a relation of Kansa's, and, after a stout resistance, obliged to flee. He led his tribe, the Yadavs, away to the far west of India, and there founded the city and kingdom of Dwarka, by the edge of the ocean. From there he aided the Pandavs, and became one of the most renowned warriors in India—his whole life being characterised by the greatest licentiousness. He was at last wounded by an arrow, which a Bhil had shot at him by mistake, and died of the wound.

The whole story of Krishna is possibly as great a myth as the story of William Tell is believed by some to be. But, mythical or historical, it had laid as firm a hold on the minds of the Hindus as the story of Tell has on the minds of the Swiss, and had been associated with a belief in the divinity of the hero. We may acquit the Brahmans of having invented it, for it is in many points quite opposed to their general teaching, but they found it too deeply rooted in popular faith for them to tamper with it. They therefore adopted it, supplemented it, and directed their pantheistic philosophy to justifying its most revolting extravagances. Krishna was represented as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. The object of this incarnation was represented as being the destruction of Kansa, the tyrannical king

of Mathura, a worshipper of Siva. Hinduism has never been able to conceive of one incarnation to put away sin once and for ever. Something is constantly going wrong in the course of mundane affairs, and, to rectify that, a god becomes incarnate, without seemingly having the power to affect future events. ✓

To get over the difficulty of Krishna's being born of low caste parents, he was represented as a changeling. His real parents were said to be Vasudeva and Devaki, the former being the rightful owner of the throne of Mathura, but dethroned by Kansa. Vasudeva is a name of Vishnu. The writing of the Bhagavat Purana, the chief authority now for the worship of Krishna, is said to have been prompted by a desire on the part of the author, Boppadeva, to establish the worship of Vasudeva. We must look on these names, therefore, as being entirely mythical, and as meaning simply that the worship of Vishnu had been suppressed by Siva, and that Krishna was raised up to re-establish it. It is now, however, accepted as a substantial fact by the Hindus. Kansa is said to have been warned by a voice from heaven that the child of Devaki would destroy him. When the time of her deliverance approached, she and her husband were by his orders manacled and confined in a tower surrounded with guards, but all in vain. When Krishna was born, the manacles fell off, the guard fell asleep. Vasudeva bore Krishna across the Jumna, whose waters dried up at the touch of Krishna's foot, to the house of Nanda, whose wife had just been delivered of a daughter. He changed the two

children, and returned with the female infant to his prison. He and his wife were miraculously bound as before ; the guards woke up, and informed Kansa that the child was born. He rushed in to destroy her, but she was carried up to heaven, and escaped.

This story may be taken as a purely Brahmanical invention.<sup>1</sup> In the subsequent parts of the story, Brahmanical influence is seen rather in the mystic explanation given of traditions which had taken too deep a hold to be forgotten or ignored. Once, when his mother had caught him stealing some cheese, and was about to whip him as he deserved, he is said to have opened his mouth and shown her the illusion of the three worlds therein, whereby she became convinced that everything belonged to him, and that she could not question his right to take the cheese if he liked. The bull he killed—the hardest nut for the Brahmans to crack—is represented as having been a demon sent in that form to destroy him. The part of his life most shocking to the moral sense is the story of his adultery with the gopis, the wives of the herdsmen of Brindaban. In the Bhagavat Purana—where we have the latest philosophising on the subject—the story is supposed to be related by a sage called Sukhdeva to a king Parikshit ; and when he comes to this passage the king objects that the story is highly immoral. The sage replies : That these gopis

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<sup>1</sup> In this story we may trace a distortion of the narrative in Matthew of Herod's attempt to destroy the infant Jesus. This story does not appear in Hindu literature till after the time of the first efforts of Christianity to penetrate India. See below, chap. xi.

were heavenly nymphs, who had come to earth to enjoy the society of God when He became incarnate ; that ' he who moves within the gopis, their husbands, and, indeed, all embodied beings, is their ruler, who only in sport assumed a body upon earth.' In the popular version of the story, too, the following verse is quoted, which might almost find a place in a Christian work :—

'The rosary vain, and vain to call "Lord ! Lord !" by day and night ;

If false the heart, then vain the show ; in truth doth God delight.'

This seems a noble sentiment, but as applied in the context it means that, if the heart be right, outward conduct matters nothing, that consequently there was nothing wrong in the conduct of Krishna and the gopis, as he was god, and they looked to nothing but his divinity. This to us sounds like disgusting blasphemy, but it shows what pantheism has done for Hinduism. The pundits allegorise, the common people gloat over the plain narrative. Nothing is more marked than the different ways in which the best educated pundits and the common people meet an attack as to the character of their god. The former fence, explain away, spiritualise all the indecent stories, till they say they derive edification from them. The latter answer plainly : He had power, why should he not use it to please himself in any way he chose ? Why should we quarrel with the play or pranks of the deity any more than with those of a boy ?

This is by far the most popular incarnation of

Vishnu, and, indeed, the most popular god of India. Images of him are more frequent than of any other. These are generally attempts to represent him performing some of his feats, but there are also many adaptations of other images that had become celebrated in certain districts. The best known of these is that of Juggahnath in Orissa. It is a shapeless, hideous idol—nothing but a black stump with a head upon it. It was probably an old idol revered in that part of the country, and, when the worship of Krishna spread, it was adopted as one of his names (Lord of the World) and one of his representations, the difference between it and the others being accounted for by saying that his limbs had dropped off on account of his immorality !

Since Krishna, a ninth incarnation of Vishnu as BUDDHA is said to have taken place. This was introduced probably for the purpose of conciliating the Buddhists, and also of ascribing to Vishnu all the great movements that have taken place in India. There is still a sect of Buddha-Vaishnavas who worship Vishnu under the name of Pandurang, but the worship of Krishna overshadows his ; it has still more vitality, and is undergoing fresher developments than any other form of Hinduism. A tenth incarnation is looked for, but meanwhile the sovereignty of Krishna is maintained by repetitions of his incarnation. There is a god of the name of Ram-Deva worshipped by some castes in Rajputana. He seems to have been a Rajput who set himself up for a teacher, and was after death deified by his followers. The Vaishnavas secured

his disciples by representing him as an incarnation of Krishna. How often this god has become incarnate it would be indeed difficult to say.

I have mentioned that a tenth incarnation is looked for, called, in the Puranas, KALKIN. Who or what this is to be is not very clearly decided. I would merely notice an idea that seems to have some adherents in India, that the English are this tenth incarnation of Vishnu.<sup>1</sup> I once found this expressed in a part of India where, I believe, no missionary had gone before. When I was remonstrating with some Hindus on their worshipping a being who had been guilty of such acts as Krishna, one man replied very warmly, 'Why, these were but his sports. You English have your sports. You have the railway and the steamboat and the telegraph, and no one blames you. Why should you blame Krishna for sporting in *his* way?'

That this idea is held not merely among the illiterate, the following quotation from a work by a Hindu, a native of Bombay, will show:—

'There are traditions in this land which perhaps none has yet attended to with due concern—that the East will be completely changed by a nation from the West; and the tenth Avatar of Vishnu, a man on a white horse, so current among the prophecies of the sacred Brahmanical writings, must be looked on to typify the advent of the English in India. Statesmen vainly look upon the Anglo-Indian empire as an accident, something that will not last long; and, though

<sup>1</sup> But some consider, too, that the English are afraid of this tenth Avatar. When vaccination was introduced into the Ajmere district, the report spread that it was a device of the English to discover a new incarnation of Vishnu, who was to have white blood, and who, they feared, was to extirpate them from India.



events like the Mutiny of 1857 frequently give to that expression a significance it can never otherwise bear, the prophecy of the West, "Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem," and the prophecy of the East relating to the tenth incarnation of Vishnu, a man on a white horse coming from the West, and destroying everything Brahmanical, render it imperative on us to accept, however reluctantly, that European supremacy in Asia is one of the permanent conditions of the world !'<sup>1</sup>

These are the principal incarnations of this god.<sup>2</sup> It will be seen that he embodies the natural tendency to hero-worship—that he presents the Hindu conception of 'God in history.' It will be seen that the conception is one of might, not united with moral purity; and that the pantheistic philosophy has justified the wickedness and violence of the god on grounds quite consistent with itself.

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<sup>1</sup> *Lights and Shades of the East.* By Framji Bomanji. *Alliance Press*, Bombay. The 'man on a white horse coming from the West' is the popular idea of the tenth incarnation. But it is not so stated in the Puranas. The following is the prophecy as it stands in the Vishnu Purana:—'When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon earth; he will be born in the family of Vishnuyasas—an eminent Brahman of Sambhalu village—as Kalki, endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. By his irresistible might he will destroy the Mhlechchhas and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened, and shall be as pellucid as crystal.'—*Vish. Pur.* iv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> The Bhāgavat enumerates twenty-two, including, besides those mentioned here, sacrifice (see *ante*, p. 31), Rikhabha (p. 63), Prithu (p. 100).



*Hindu Worship.*—I now turn to speak of the worship of this god, but will first say something of Hindu worship in general. It is of two kinds, 'the way of DEVOTION'<sup>1</sup> and the 'way of WORKS,'<sup>2</sup> the former being more specially Vishnu worship, and the latter Siva worship, though both are now mingled to a great degree. Those who have learned the higher philosophy try to show that both resolve themselves into the philosophic 'way of KNOWLEDGE.'<sup>3</sup>

Some forms of worship are common to all the ways. Foremost among these is INVOCATION of the Supreme Spirit as Rāma. This, it is said, aids meditation. We are apt to forget God, but, by repeating His name, we are kept in mind of Him. Such may have been the original meaning of this worship, but power is generally supposed to exist in the mere sound; and its repetition is supposed to impose an obligation on the god, in return for which he is bound to grant favours, as much as the merchant is bound to give goods in return for the money which he receives. The oftener the name is repeated, the greater the obligation on the part of the god becomes. Sincerity, even purpose and intelligence, are not necessary to give efficacy to the invocation. A story is currently told of a Bhil, who, having unwittingly killed a Brahman, was told constantly to repeat the word *Marā* (dead) as an expiation. He did so for years, and the transposition of the syllables 'Marā marā' formed the invocation 'Rāma, Rāma,' till at last Vishnu, hearing himself invoked, appeared to the man, granted him enlightenment, and promised

<sup>1</sup> Bhakti Mārg.

<sup>2</sup> Karma Mārg.

<sup>3</sup> Gyān Mārg.

him liberation on condition that he would write a book to promote his worship. The man then became a Brahman, and was known as Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana. Even more absurd stories are told to illustrate the same idea, and it has come to be fixed in the minds of the Hindus that the mere repetition of this name is sufficient. Hence they use it on almost all occasions—the Vaishnavas to invoke Vishnu and the Saivas to invoke Siva.<sup>1</sup> They use it as a salutation on meeting, they use it as an exclamation of wonder. When not otherwise employed, they mechanically turn round their rosary and mutter the name at each bead.

But it is more generally through their images that the gods are worshipped. This brings up the whole question of IMAGE WORSHIP, or the worship of material objects. 'Stone worship' is as common a name in India as image worship, and many of the objects of worship—more, however, among the Saivas than the Vaishnavas—are mere stones or rocks with a red daub upon them. This form of idolatry does not seem to have belonged originally to Brahmanical worship, but to have been engrafted on it from the worship of the aboriginal tribes or earlier settlers in India. To these same sources may we attribute the worship of most of the images popular in special localities and among special castes. But it is also highly probable that

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<sup>1</sup> The distinctive Vishnu invocation is *Hari Ram*, and the Siva, *Har Ram*.

the Buddhistic practice of erecting images of Buddha and of Buddhist saints may have given an impetus to such worship. However it may have originated, it now flourishes in Hinduism with all the vigour of a strong life, and the Brahmans have come to be as degraded stone and image worshippers as any.

There are three views with regard to this worship in India. The first is the PHILOSOPHICAL, held by the educated and thinking few, that the image is an aid to meditation and devotion. We are apt, they say, to forget God; but when we see the stone it reminds us of Him, we meditate on Him, and invoke His name. But a much more general view is the MYSTICAL one: that, according to the charm originally pronounced at the consecration of an idol, indicated by certain red marks on the stone or by the form of the image, some particular deity is present in it. This doctrine is somewhat analogous to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the real presence; but the Hindus do not believe in a corporeal, only in a spiritual presence—that the spirit of the god comes at the bidding of the priest into the idol, as a man might go into a house to dwell, and that he knows and accepts what is offered to the idol as offered to himself. And, lastly, there is the LITERAL view, held by the most ignorant of the population, that the idol, by the Brahman's charm, is itself made a god, and by its own power and will can accomplish for its worshippers what they desire. Hence the Hindus, if their prayers are not fulfilled, sometimes scourge their idols, or cast them out of their temples. Sometimes the priests exhibit them

loaded with chains, and tell their devotees that their god is in debt, and has been put in chains by his creditors, and so must remain till his debts are paid.

I have spoken of the MANTRAS or charms which the Brahmans use in consecrating idols. These are mostly passages from the Vedas, repeated still in their archaic language—a language quite unintelligible to those who use them, as the source whence they are derived is unknown.<sup>1</sup> They are thus nothing better than unmeaning formulæ, but they are supposed to have power over the gods; hence the common saying, that the gods are subject to the mantras, and the mantras are subject to the Brahmans. These last are thus supposed to be able to compel the presence of the god into the image which they wish to consecrate. But many sects hold that each worshipper is able at pleasure to enjoy the presence of his deity, and for this purpose, when he is initiated into the sect, its peculiar mantra or formula is taught him. This generally consists of a short Sanskrit form, meaning ‘I salute Krishna,’ or ‘I salute Narayana,’ or some such thing. By repeating this at the commencement of any act of worship, they believe the presence of the god they invoke is secured as really as in the idol. The philosophical explanation of this is, that the repetition of the formula helps to concentrate the

<sup>1</sup> A pundit, well read in ordinary Sanskrit literature, calling on me one day, happened to look over a volume which I had of the Rig Veda with commentary. He was quite startled to find in it certain *mantras* which he had been using for years; to learn that they were in the Veda, and had a meaning.

mind on God, and to enable us to meditate better on Him.

One of the most striking facts in modern Hinduism is, that in acts of worship, whether of these idols or of the deity conceived as spiritually present, sacrifice, which formed the centre of early Vedic worship, is conspicuous by its absence. Offerings are indeed made to the idols, but they are not considered expiations for sin. They are looked on as food for the gods; they are allowed to remain before the idol long enough for it to be supposed to have consumed their essence; and then their apparent remnant is taken by the priests. Bloody offerings, sacrifices of goats and buffaloes, are common in many parts of India, as were also sacrifices of children till the British rule was firmly established. But these are acts of fetich worship more akin to the worship of the African tribes than of the early Aryas—different alike in name and in purpose—bloody food offered to propitiate a bloodthirsty deity, instead of symbols of the sins of the sacrificer being borne by another. They are found chiefly among the aboriginal tribes; the tendency of Hinduism is to put them down,<sup>1</sup> and where they have been

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<sup>1</sup> Near Todgurb in Mairwara is a temple to Piplaj or Devi, where the Mairs, an aboriginal tribe, used to sacrifice children, till the district was subdued by the English about the year 1820, and where, till within a few years, thirty or forty buffaloes were annually sacrificed with the most savage cruelty. A Vaishnava Brahman was appointed Tahsildar of the place for a few years, and forbade the sacrifice, but under his successor they were renewed. The attention of Government being called to the subject, the sacrifice was allowed, but the cruelties attending it forbidden.

incorporated into it they form one of its greatest stains. Brahmanical sacrifice has disappeared from Hinduism as completely as Levitical sacrifice has disappeared from Judaism. In the latter it has been fulfilled, in the former it has been superseded. It was impossible that it should continue after the revolution in Indian thought which Buddhism had accomplished. Primitive sacrifice could not consist with the idea of transmigration. Vicarious atonement by sacrifice could have no meaning for persons who looked for vicarious atonement through another consciousness of their own selves. When the human soul is considered part of the divine spirit, there is no one to whom atonement can be made.

*Vishnu Worship.*—These general remarks on Hindu worship and ceremony will enable us better to understand the peculiarities of Vishnu worship. It suits the character of the god. He is the sovereign source of power, and his worshippers need only to make a formal acknowledgment of this. Their worship is therefore the ‘way of devotion.’ They go to his temples, and make a presentation of ‘wealth, body, and soul,’<sup>1</sup> but this with the majority is a mere form; it does not mean renouncing any gain, pleasure, or sin. A god who so pampered his own body while on earth cannot ask anything very severe of his followers—a god who committed such sins as he did, will not require any very strict renouncement of sin from his worshippers. Their main idea seems to be just paying to the idol the

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<sup>1</sup> Dhan, Tan, Man.

same respect as they would pay to the god if he were still incarnate as a prince on earth. The idol takes the place of the king; the temple is his palace.

When George I. became King of England, his Court was still kept up in Hanover. His usual levees were held, but in his place a portrait of him was set on the throne, and the courtiers bowed to it as they would to the king. In the same way the Hindus bow to the images of Vishnu, as they would to Rama or Krishna were they still on earth; and they have a better reason for it than these Hanoverians had, for they believe that their god *pervades* the image, and is conscious of service done to it as of service done to himself. They therefore go every morning to his temple to pay their respects to him as they do to their Rajahs or Thakurs.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the popular name for an image of Vishnu is Thakurji. They believe that, just as a prince is satisfied with the appearance of his subjects at his court, and as he will grant their petitions, so is the idol satisfied with the presence of his worshippers in his temple, and ready to grant their prayers. And as a subject, when he wants any great boon from his rajah, must make him and his ministers large presents; so, too, must they occasionally be ready to make large gifts to the idol and to his priests—even to the extent of wealth, body, and soul—especially if they are seeking liberation. Some idols are more specially worshipped on certain days—as kings have greater levees on their birth-days. Then pilgrims throng from all parts of India

<sup>1</sup> A noble or landed proprietor next in order to a rajah.



in crowds; the god is carried out in procession, and exhibited to the attendant multitudes, who are told that a glimpse of it removes all sin. The most famed of these festivals is that of Juggahnath in Orissa, whose identification with Krishna I have already noticed. At it the Hindus make a sacrifice of something dearer to them than wealth, viz. caste, for then all castes mingle promiscuously, and the worship of the god is supposed to sanctify the breaking of caste rules. Formerly devotees used to throw themselves before the wheels of the huge car on which the idol was mounted, to be crushed to death, assured that thereby they would attain union with him.

This consecration of wealth, body, and soul, as worship, produces in some sects still more pernicious results. Some, such as the VALLABHĀCHĀRYAS of Bombay, teach that the god is not present in the idol, but incarnate in the priest or Mahārājah,<sup>1</sup> and that it is to him that the consecration must be made. As the worshippers throng into the temples, where the Maharajahs sit enthroned to receive their homage, guards are stationed at the gates with whips to scourge all who enter, so that they may experience the effects of the anger of the god, and this is considered part of the consecration of the body. In more esoteric worship they emulate the example of their prototype Krishna, and justify their doing so on the same principles as those on which the Puranas justify his conduct. But 'it is a shame even to speak of those things which are

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<sup>1</sup> King.



done of them'—in worship. When the books of a similar sect—the Bahm Mārgis—were first discovered by Professor Wilson, he declared that he believed there must be some allegorical meaning attached to them, because no human beings could be found so debased as to practise what was therein inculcated as the worship of God. But a trial on an action for slander brought by one of these Maharajahs against a native editor, who had exposed him, revealed the practices of the sect in an English court before English judges. It showed that these sacred books were no allegories, that, on the contrary, they did not sufficiently depict the vile licentiousness of the orgies which they sanctified with the name of worship.

And this is only a legitimate deduction from the higher principles of Hinduism. When once pantheism has shown that virtue and vice are alike indifferent for salvation, and thereby cleared the way for the acceptance of such a character as Krishna as an embodiment of Deity, the way is further cleared for his worshippers seeking to be like him. Happily the power of conscience within even them is not altogether effaced, and the worst of them is better than their deity, while it is only a small section, I would fain trust, that belong to these more degraded sects. Many Vaishnavas walk according to the light of nature, and are exemplary in all the relations of life; but the strange thing is, that when they feel their sin, their need of forgiveness and of the aid of divine power, they should resort to a god capable of appearing in such forms

and doing such deeds; and that they should be satisfied with the slight ceremonies imposed by his worship. The Vishnu religion is well termed by the other sects in India the self-indulgent way of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

*Vaishnava Reformers.*—The Vaishnavas have produced many reformers both philosophic and popular. Foremost among these was RĀMANŪJA, who lived early in the twelfth century, to whose influence subsequent reformers owe most of their impulse. He held the theistic doctrine of the personality of God and of His distinction from the universe and from the human soul. He attacked the pantheism of the Vedānta with a dialectic power and high moral tone such as few controversialists have reached. He denounced as blasphemous the doctrine of God's being active only when conditioned by Maya, or ignorance, and maintained that all the conditions of sovereignty and activity were eternally God's. But he did not get quite clear of all pantheistic ideas. He maintained that at the final liberation souls were absorbed in God, but not unified with Him. He looked on the union as a mechanical mixture, while the Vedantists would consider it rather a chemical mixture. As milk though mingled with water does not become water, so neither do human souls, though absorbed in the Supreme by virtue of meditation, obtain identity with Him.

One of his successors, RAMANANDA, modified this, and maintained that the Supreme Spirit might be

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<sup>1</sup> Pusht Marg.

both unconditioned and conditioned, becoming the latter out of love to his worshippers. The concrete form which this speculation assumed was that God, out of love to man, became incarnate; and the most popular writer of his school, Tulsidas, author of a version of the Ramayana in the vulgar dialect, expresses this in language that a Christian might almost use. The followers of Ramananda, called Ramanandis or Ramawats, worship Vishnu in the incarnation of Rama Chandra. Their philosophical reform was accompanied by a practical reform, which sought, among other things, loosening the distinctions of caste and spreading sacred knowledge in the vernacular instead of the obsolete Sanskrit.

As they fell from their first zeal other reforming sects sprang from them, some of them emulating in their self-denial the severest of the Saiva sects. But the Nemesis of their origin seems to have followed them all. Starting from the worship of a sensual god, they all sank to his level. After a protest against religious corruption, which endured for little more than the life of their founder, their worship sank to a grossness emulating that against which they first protested. The latest, and in some respects the most earnest Vaishnava attempt at reform—the RĀM SNEH sect, which admits other castes as well as Brahmans to be ministers of religion, and discards all idol-worship—has sunk as low as the lowest, and confounds the practice of uncleanness with the service of God.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SAIVISM.

TURNING to the worship of Siva, the other great god of the Hindus, we find the opposite pole of pantheistic thought at work. Vishnu worship starts from the idea of God condescending to man, Siva worship from the idea of man raising himself to be God. Vaishnavism, considering that God pervades everything, has recognised Him especially in the heroes of the nation; Saivism, considering our souls to be part of God, teaches us to seek to realise that union by subduing the body and mortifying the flesh. We have seen that the idea of the power of austerity entered early into Indian religion, and was by some considered the source of the power of the gods<sup>1</sup> even before the rise of Buddhism; but it was after the rise of that system that this stream of thought gained power in India, and it was possibly in seeking to combat Buddhism with its own weapons that the Brahmans were led to exalt the worship of Siva.

It is difficult to say how he came to take the place he has done in the Hindu pantheon. The meaning of his name is 'Gracious.' The word does

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 34.

not occur in the Vedas as the name of a god, but it occurs as an epithet of RUDRA, with whom Siva was afterwards identified. This was the name of the god of the storm, and it explains a number of the attributes of Siva. The storm, rushing down from the mountains, led to the mountain being considered his abode; the constant muttering of the thunder, which the echoes appear to make incessant for hours, might suggest his constant invocations on the mountain top; the irresistible power with which the lightning strikes those on whom it falls might originate the glance from his eye that consumed those who excited his wrath; the destructive fury of the storm, overthrowing houses, tearing up trees, raising the torrents to sweep away their banks, explain his attributes as the god of destruction; the aspect of the plain after the storm has swept over it—the plough turning up the soft earth, formerly a hardened cake—a tinge of verdure clothing what was formerly a barren waste—is sufficient to account for his being called also the god of fertility and reproduction; whilst the effect of the storm in purifying and clearing the atmosphere, and bracing up the frame, may account for the medical power attributed to him.

Such is the Vedic god with whom Siva is now identified; and so we may account for some of the attributes now attached to the latter. But this is a more recent identification, and it is probable that, as he is now generally conceived of in India, he was originally the god of some of the races who

settled in India before the Aryas. It is probably from them, too, that the LINGA has been introduced. This is a stone symbol of the power of generation, and symbolises the reproductive power attributed to the god. It is in a prominent position in all his temples, and he is sometimes worshipped by flowers being strewn on it.

The myths about Siva's first forcing Brahma and Vishnu to acknowledge his power—too coarse to be repeated here—point to the reluctant acknowledgment of his claims by older sects. There is little human interest in the legends regarding him—nothing, as in the case of Vishnu, to intertwine him with the history of India. The popular idea with regard to him is that he was a mendicant who gained and maintains his power by austerities, meditation, and invocation. In his statues he is represented with his hand open, as if begging for alms; he is said to have gone about begging, riding on a bull, which is consequently now considered his sacred animal. Stories of drunkenness, licentiousness, and ferocious cruelty are attributed to him; but his vice differs from that of Krishna's very much as a half-idiotic boor's might differ from that of a prince. The conception of a man becoming god through godlike, because most perfectly human, conduct, has no place in Saivism. The mendicant becomes a terrible god by becoming as unhuman as possible, and all the representations of Siva carry out this idea. He is represented as having a third eye in his forehead, with a glance

from which he strikes dead those who offend him; his rosary is composed of human skulls, in which he is said to delight, and his necklace is of the same; while serpents mingle with his hair and wreath round his neck. He is said thus to be sitting on KAILAS, an unseen mountain of the Himalayas, still turning his rosary and engaged in invocation, thereby continually increasing his power. This power is not connected with any moral or intellectual greatness, or any power of will. It seems to be very little under his own control. One unfortunate god is said once to have disturbed him at his invocations; his anger was aroused, and a glance from his eye reduced him to ashes. When reproached for what he had done, he granted him to be born again as Krishna. So, too, in a drunken fit he is said once to have struck off the head of his son Ganesha, and when reproached by his wife for so doing, he replaced it with an elephant's head. One name by which he is known among the common people is the simple or half-witted lord.<sup>1</sup> Their idea seems to be that this simplicity makes it easier to cajole, and at the same time more dangerous to disturb him.

But the main feature in his religion is, that he symbolises the results that may be attained by austerities and invocation. The very absence of inherent greatness or power in the character of the god tends to exalt the principle which he represents. In conformity with this, the worship paid to him starts from the idea of getting power over him by

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<sup>1</sup> Bhola Nath.

similar austerities and meditation. It is therefore called the way of works,<sup>1</sup> or the way of hardships.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly it is the JOGIS or ascetics who form the main strength of the Saiva sects. Some of these include men of real learning and power, who discard all the gross traditions with regard to their god, look on him as the representative of the Supreme Spirit, and endeavour by study and learning to acquire such knowledge as shall enable them to realise their unity with him. SANKARĀCHĀRI, perhaps the greatest master of the Vedānta philosophy, belonged to the Saivas; its most strenuous and able supporters at present are to be found among them, especially in the sect called the DĀNDIS, among whom alone, as far as I have observed, are iconoclasts and zealous reformers on a purely Hindu basis to be found. These adopt in its highest sense the Saiva principle of man raising himself to unity with the divine.

But in general it is a mere mortification of the flesh, a mere unhumanising of the man, that is looked to as the means of attaining power. A story is told of one who for a thousand years continued standing on the tip of his left toe, during the first hundred years of which period he lived on fruits, the second hundred on withered leaves, the third hundred on water, and the remaining seven hundred on air. At the end of this period MAHĀDEVA,<sup>3</sup> or Siva, appeared to him, and granted him what boons he desired.

There is a local tradition at Pushkar, near Ajmer,

<sup>1</sup> Karma Mārga.

<sup>2</sup> Kasht Mārga.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. the Great God.



to the effect, that on the occasion of a great gathering of gods and Brahmans at the place, some of the latter went to pay their respects to a celebrated recluse of the name of Mankan. One of them had some coarse grass in his hand, with which he accidentally cut the recluse's finger, when instead of blood a green fluid came out. Seeing the effect which his devotions had had, he began to dance with joy and pride, till Siva, to humble him, went and opened his own finger before him, when a stream of white ashes came out. Mankan, seeing proof of a devotion so much more powerful than his own, became silent, and worshipped him. Then, after asking and obtaining the promise of certain blessings for those who should visit his hermitage on certain days, 'Mankan became absorbed in Siva.'

This story points to an idea held by others as well as Hindu recluses, that the source of corruption is especially in the blood, and that if it can be dried up the passions will be subdued. Among the present ascetics, however, we find little more than a mere symbolism of ancient ideas. They do generally succeed in making themselves appear very unhuman, as unlike men as men can be, though whether it be a sublimation or degradation of their nature depends on the point of view from which they are looked at. The body is covered with ashes, to signify the drying up of the blood, the scorching up of the passions. It is sometimes further mortified by self-inflicted tortures. One arm is held out straight till it is stiffened, and

cannot again be bent. The hand is clenched and the nails allowed to grow through the flesh. Occasionally a vow of silence for a period of twelve years is taken. Some live alone in the woods or in caves, but more frequently they wander about from one shrine of Siva's to another. Some classes of these recluses—and there are as many kinds as there are of monks and friars—are more exclusive as to the castes which they admit into their fraternity. But in general men of any caste may join one or other of the various kinds of mendicants, and a short conversation with any of them will reveal the utterly sordid, selfish soul that exists beneath these outer disguises and self-inflicted tortures, symbolising the mortification of the flesh and its lusts. Many proverbs and rhymes are current among the common people satirising these jogis for their sordid or cowardly motives in becoming recluses, and for their gluttony and rapacity since they assumed their profession. But, with all that, they fear them, dread their curse, supply them with what they want, and even worship them. They often ask them to obtain favours for them from Siva, believing that in some way their austerities have brought him under obligation to them.

These constitute the mainstay of the Saiva sect. They are the principal worshippers of the god, but they have also a large lay following among various tribes and castes, whose objects of worship they have identified or connected with Siva. The Vaishnavas, we have seen, represented the deified

heroes of India as successive incarnations of their god, thus utilising the doctrine of transmigration. The Saivas, on the other hand, rather took up the primitive objects of worship of the various tribes, and represented them as being either manifestations or servants of Siva. Their system consequently does not present the same unity as that of their rivals; there are no broad lines by which to mark their working, and we have to pick up and put together numbers of disjointed legends in every district of India, to learn how they propagated their faith. In some cases, indeed, their course of action is plain enough. Siva is said to be married to a goddess named PĀRVATI, which means 'daughter of the mountain.' But a goddess may have more than one name. So DEVI, who was worshipped by the Rajputs, MĀTA, a goddess of some of the hill tribes, DURGA and KALI, Bengal divinities, were all identified with Parvati, the wife of Siva. These were all more or less sanguinary deities, and had thus an affinity with the savage, unhuman nature of Siva.

One of the most popular gods in India is GANESH or GANPATI, which means 'lord of hosts.' It is generally supposed that this means evil hosts; and his worship is a sort of blackmail to keep them from doing harm. He is also the god of learning. His image is, at all events, in all native schools, and at the beginning of most Hindi books—whether, as sometimes explained, to propitiate him not to annoy the learners, or to ask his aid as 'lord of the host of letters,' is not settled. At all events, he is universally invoked over India, and the Saivas have

secured his worship, as subordinate to that of Siva's, by representing him as a son of that god. Again, the favourite deities of many agricultural castes were BHAIRON and KHETRPĀL. These were allowed to remain and be worshipped as of old, but they were represented as attendants on Siva. The Hindus often say, that if any one wishes to get a hearing of the magistrate, he must tip his servants; and so the farmers think that the best way to secure Siva's protection for their fields is by paying attention to his subordinates. Another point to be noticed is, that the priests in many of the temples of these deities are not Brahmans, but members of other castes, the former not seeming to have cared to disturb the usual arrangements for worship among those whom they sought to proselytise, if they only acknowledged their supremacy.

But it is only when we begin to examine into the history of each old shrine that we find with what marvellous ingenuity the Brahmans have made themselves 'all things to all men.' Of this I will give one or two examples that have come under my own observation in India.

About six miles distant from Ajmer is a lake of the name of Pushkar, with a town of the same name on its banks, considered one of the most holy places in India. As a god may be present in a stone or image, so he may be present in any locality—in a grove, a stream, or lake. There are some streams, such as the Ganges, and some lakes, such as Pushkar, which are supposed to be the

abodes of powerful deities, who are bound to grant forgiveness of sins to all who may worship them by bathing in their waters. These localities are called by the people TIRTHS, or places of pilgrimage, but by the initiated this name is applied only to the deity who gives sanctity to the place. The lake and town of Pushkar are there throughout the year, but the tirth is there for only five days at the beginning of winter. The explanation of this given in the sacred books is: that such multitudes were obtaining salvation by his means, that the gods complained that heaven was becoming too crowded, and remonstrated with Brahma, who thereupon removed Pushkar to the sky except for these five days. On other occasions he can be drawn into the waters by the use of certain charms. The probable explanation seems to be, that from time immemorial a fair has been held at that time, as being the most convenient time of the year, and the Brahmans afterwards tried to give it a religious sanction.

In the traditions and rites connected with this lake, we can see different stages of religious thought and worship fossilised, as in the successive strata of a fissure of the earth we find traces of successive developments of life. We see first of all the aboriginal inhabitants with their tree and serpent worship. Then came the Gujars, a pastoral tribe, who worshipped a goddess, Gaitri, and who seem to have been the first, as they are still the most devout, believers in the efficacy of Pushkar. Then came the Brahmans, at a time when Brahma was

still their god, and they had not yet found it politic to adopt either Vishnu or Siva. They performed a great sacrifice at the time of the fair, which they represented as being a sacrifice performed by Brahma. To symbolise the adherence of the Gujars to their faith, they invented a legend to the effect that Brahma, in the absence of his wife, Savitri, had been obliged to espouse Gaitri, in order to accomplish the sacrifice. They likewise accounted for the serpent worship by representing a Brahman as having been, by the curse of another, changed into a serpent, and having been solaced by Brahma with the assurance that divine honours would be paid him. Pushkar is now the only place in India where the worship of Brahma occupies a conspicuous place.

Lastly came the Saivas. They found the legends of Brahma too strongly rooted to be ignored or displaced, so they recast the story, representing Brahma as asking permission of their god to perform the sacrifice, and frequently admitting his supremacy during its course. They also identified Siva with some of the most popular objects of worship in Pushkar and the neighbourhood. One tradition has been already referred to.<sup>1</sup> The cell of a holy man called Atmat, or the wanderer, had been an object of superstitious reverence. He was introduced into the legend as a servant of Siva, absorbed into him during the sacrifice. The name of Atanteshwar, or Lord of Atmat, was given to Siva, and a handsome Saiva temple erected over

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<sup>1</sup> See page 139.

the hermit's cell. Again, at a place not far from Pushkar, there is a rock called Ajogand,<sup>1</sup> with a mark on it, said to be that of a goat which, on a certain day of the fair, the people had been accustomed to visit and worship. The Saivas laid hold of this, and represented the goat, whose print was on the rock, as a form into which Siva had transformed himself in order to kill a demon. They also represented him as promising to leave his Himalayan home for one day in the year, and to be present then in that rock—the day of course being that consecrated by popular usage.<sup>2</sup>

It will be seen that the whole object of the Brahmans was to assimilate, not in any way to eradicate, ancient religious usages. They seem to have been as compliant with regard to the moral practices of those whom they thus proselytised. In the 'Lay of Pushkar,' the Gujars are represented as being most loose-living men, but their admission as such seems to be looked on rather as an evidence of the catholicity of the Brahmanical religion. As they were then so they are now, after centuries of Brahmanical supremacy.

To the south-east of Ajmer is a district inhabited by a tribe called the Parihar Minas. An incident in the history of one of their progenitors, according to their present tradition, has led them to look on the boar as a sacred animal, though this may be

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<sup>1</sup>The leaping goat.

<sup>2</sup>There are Vaishnava traditions also connected with Pushkar, but these are evidently more modern.



a relic of boar worship. When the Mohammedans came to India, the Minas seem to have confounded their looking on the boar as an unclean animal with their own regard for it as a sacred animal, and to have been induced in some degree to conform to their faith. Their old idol, however, they still worshipped, but gave it the Mohammedan name of Father Adam.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the Saiva Brahmans got hold of them. They did not try to persuade them to give up the worship of Father Adam or of the boar, but simply to allow that Father Adam was a name of Siva, and to worship the cow as well as the boar. Temples were erected in their principal villages, and stones placed in them bearing representations of Siva as Father Adam, of a cow and a boar, and inscriptions to the effect: that the Mohammedans respected the boar and the Hindus the cow, but the true followers of Father Adam respected both; and if they should neglect the worship of any one of the three, the worship of the other two would not benefit them. There are several Saiva temples in the district in which I heard the Brahmans invoke Mahadeva,<sup>2</sup> and the Minas, Father Adam.

Here, too, the Brahmanical influence has been pernicious to the customs of the people. It was an old custom of the Parihars to kill their female infants, the object being, as they said, to avoid the expense of their marriage. But some, who had been more deeply instructed in priestly lore, assured me that when Father Adam's worship was intro-

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<sup>1</sup> Adam baba.

<sup>2</sup> A name of Siva.



duced, one of the Minas, who had been most zealous in promoting it, obtained from the god a promise that his sons should be as numerous as the hairs on his body ; and, as the divine blessing is generally bestowed through means, he further obtained divine permission for the Parihars to kill their daughters, that so the mothers, being relieved from their nursing, might be sooner able to bear sons. Thus, instead of trying to eradicate a cruel and bad custom, the Brahmans gave it a divine sanction. When English officers, some sixty years ago, visited this district, and tried to put down female infanticide, the strongest objection they met with was the command of Father Adam.

These are specimens of how the Saivas have gone to work ; and if the traditions throughout India about Siva and his subordinates were examined, they would probably be found to be skilful adaptations of older objects of worship.<sup>1</sup>

In nearly all these cases the old form of worship

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<sup>1</sup> 'The missionary operations of the Brahmans are indeed worthy of special study. They have been carried on from time immemorial ; and the process is still going on amongst hill tribes and other remote populations. A Brahman makes his appearance in a so-called aboriginal village, and establishes his influence by an affectation of superior sanctity, aided by the fame of his spells, incantations, mystic rites, and astrological predictions. He declares the village idol to be a form of one or other of the great gods or goddesses of the Brahmanical pantheon ; and he professes to teach the true forms of worship. He divides the villagers into castes, and introduces caste laws. In this manner the populations of India have been brought under the spiritual domination of the Brahmans, and the caste system has been introduced into secluded regions in which it was previously unknown.'—Wheeler's *Hist. of India*, vol. iii. pp. 401, 402.

was still maintained. It is almost exclusively among the Saiva sects that the sacrifices of blood, to which I have referred, are offered. But this is accounted for by saying the god delights in drinking blood and wearing skulls; thus his worship was accommodated to the demon worship of many of the aboriginal tribes. It is more generally, however, his spouse, under her different names, who is thus honoured. As Mata or Devi she is still worshipped by the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes; as Kali she was formerly worshipped by children being offered to her. As worshippers of her the Thugs were included in the Hindu system; her command and example were cited to make Sati a religious act. It is chiefly through the worship of these goddesses, and such subordinate gods as Bhairon and Khetrpal, that Siva worship maintains its hold of the populace. His own temples are deserted throughout the year, except on the occasion of festivals, and then they are thronged chiefly by wandering devotees.

One of the worst developments of Saivism is the rise of the BAHM MARGIS, 'left-handed' or secret sects. These are sects that meet in private, when all rules of caste are for the time set aside, and all eat and drink together; when they meet again in public, caste rules resume their sway. There is reason to believe that in some cases this is only a way of getting relief from the tyranny of caste; but in many, if not in the majority, of these sects rules of morality share the same fate as the rules of caste. This is especially the case with those called

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the SĀKTAS, or the worshippers of Sakti, the female principle. Some of their holy books, called the TANTRAS, true to the principle of Saiva worship, teach a religion of works, but the works they inculcate are violating the laws of sobriety, decency, and truth. The religion of works and hardship leads to as low an abyss as the religion of devotion and ease.

## CHAPTER IX.

### RECONCILIATION OF THE SECTS—REVIEW OF HINDUISM.

THE worship of Vishnu and the worship of Siva, then, symbolise originally two opposite, almost antagonistic tendencies of religious thought,—the former regarding Deity as becoming man, with all his imperfections, and requiring to be served as we serve the mighty of our race,—the latter regarding man as by his own exertions freeing himself from all human weaknesses and feelings, and raising himself to the power of the Deity. This antagonism of principles produced a frequent hostility between the rival sects, such as can hardly be explained by the external accidents of their systems. There seems little doubt that Vishnu worship was the older among the Aryan castes at all events. We find in it the continuity of old Brahmanism better preserved, and it has altogether a milder character. This mildness is apparent even in its opposition to Buddhism, and, as shown in the story of the ninth incarnation, it was more ready to amalgamate than to oppose. Saivism, on the other hand, attacked Buddhism with the vigour of a newer faith and of a nearer relationship. It animated the kings

who fought against Buddhism; it was the faith of the fire races of the Rajputs, whose arms finally made Brahmanism triumphant. But the Saivas seem originally to have been opposed to the Vaishnavas as much as to the Buddhists. In the older books of the two sects we find the rival gods denounced, Vishnu banning Siva, and Siva banning Vishnu, each excluding his rival's worshippers from salvation, and consigning them to hell.

The more popular arguments as to the superiority of the two gods did not turn so much on the deeper questions of their faith as on some traditional incidents. Thus Krishna may have paid his devotions at some shrine of Siva's, or some shrine afterwards identified with his worship. At all events, the Saivas preserve the tradition of Krishna's worshipping Siva, and argue that the latter must therefore be the greater god. The Vaishnavas retort, by telling how Siva was unable to protect a certain worshipper of his from Krishna's anger, and how Siva, on the evening after his marriage with Parvati, entertained his bride with an account of Vishnu's incarnation as Rama, and worshipped him as the greatest of gods. These and similar legends are bandied about in this theological warfare.

But by degrees this controversy toned down, though what the causes were we can only surmise. It may have been the necessity of union for triumph over their common enemies the Buddhists; or it may have been the influence of the Vedanta philosophy. At all events, we find the principles of this

philosophy used to effect a reconciliation: Siva and Vishnu are both one, works are acts of devotion, and acts of devotion are works. Both gods were the same, adapted under different forms to receive different kinds of worship according to different temperaments of men. For popular purposes the union was symbolised by the heads of both gods, with that of Brahma added, being carved out of the same stone. This constitutes the TRIMURTI—three-fold image—the popular trinity of the Hindus. For the pundits this symbolises the rivals united in the universal Brahm,—the way of devotion and the way of works united in the way of knowledge. More popularly Brahma is called the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Siva<sup>1</sup> the destroyer; they are also spoken of as past, present, and future. Brahma is thus in both cases made a thing of the past, and his worship has almost entirely disappeared from India. As a matter of fact the worshippers of Vishnu look on him as creator, and destroyer as well as preserver, and so do the worshippers of Siva look on him. The main fact typified was a reconciliation of these two sects.

There has often been an analogy drawn between this Hindu and the Christian trinity, but all that can be said of the former is, that it may have been suggested by the latter. There is a chapter in the history of Hinduism that requires yet to be investi-

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<sup>1</sup> In this form they receive also the names of Hara, Hari, Har. Each of these gods has his consort. Brahma's wife is Saraswati, the goddess of poetry and eloquence; Vishnu's is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth; Siva's, Parvati, Durga, or Kali, whose worship represents that of Siva intensified.

gated, and that is the influence of early Christianity upon it. We know that in the first ages of the Church the gospel was preached in India, and that it was not without results the existence of the Malabar Christians sufficiently proves. This tells of a movement, of a struggle of some kind, of which all other traces have passed away, but of which the trace may yet be discovered in the effect it produced on Hindu thought. I doubt, however, whether to this Christian teaching we can trace the Hindu conception of the trimurti, not because it is unlikely, but because it comes too late for us to suppose the connection probable. The first indication we find of any attempt to set up the trimurti was in Bijaynagar in the beginning of the fifteenth century<sup>1</sup>—before the Portuguese had explored the East, and long after the influence of earlier Christianity must have ceased to affect India.

The trimurti was possibly an attempt to give greater popular unity to the Hindu faith under the pressure of Mohammedan attack, but the metaphysical basis, on which the union of the sects was attempted, shaped itself under the pressure of the struggle with Buddhism, and received its final form in the early part of the thirteenth century, just when the struggle with Mohammedanism was beginning. It was then that BOPADEVĀ wrote the BHĀGAVAT Purāṇa, which has had more influence on modern Hinduism than any other book. It was written in Sanskrit, but parts of it, especially those

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<sup>1</sup> Lassen, *Ind. Alt.* vol. iv.

relating to the history of Krishna, are translated into most of the modern dialects of India. In it we find the pantheistic doctrine fully developed. Krishna, its hero, is even represented as worshipping Siva, and acknowledging that they were both the same, while Siva acknowledges the power of Krishna as superior to his own. It is in it that the various legends of Vishnu have received their final form, and been explained and justified on those pantheistic bases which are now accepted generally throughout India.

Such is a brief outline of Hinduism and of the various currents of thought and of superstition which seem to have contributed to its formation. I have not given anything like a full account of it, nor have I even hinted at the existence of many of the gods that enjoy a fair degree of popularity. I have merely described the main features of the system. The reader may fill up the sketch with almost anything he pleases, from monotheism to snail worship, from self-denying beneficence to rapine and murder, and if he only acknowledge the sanctity of the cow and the superiority of the Brahmans, it will be strange if Hinduism cannot find a niche for it. Vishna and Siva are the two great rivers leading into the ocean of liberation—the Ganges and Indus of religion—and their subordinate deities may be looked on as their tributaries; but there may be as many smaller streams and rills leading to the same end as men choose to imagine.



We may now review the work that Hinduism has done for India. The Brahmanical revival attacked and conquered Buddhism by laying hold on man's felt need of a superior power, and of all the means of access to it which he had imagined, and adapting them to its own end. We have seen that it took the gods as they were, with all their imperfections and sins, and sought to establish their identity with that universal Spirit, or with parts of that universal Spirit, which it conceives of as the one existence. Pantheism logically requires that good should be correlated with evil, and Indian pantheism avowedly does so. Human passion naturally leads man to imagine a superior being tainted with the same vices as himself. When the two meet they confirm one another. Pantheism justifies the sinful idol, and the latter nails pantheism down to the practical application of its own principles. Hence in all the Hindu conceptions of the Deity holiness is not an essential; evil may also proceed from Him, and in the popular idols all that is needful is power of a certain kind and to a certain extent. That granted, they may be either angels or devils, patterns of virtue or monsters of vice—the Deity can include both. This is a taint from which Hinduism has never been able to free itself. It has escaped in some instances, as we have seen in the case of Ramanuja and Ramananda, from absolute pantheism. But even Tulsidas, the most popular disciple of the latter, and exponent of his system, says, 'I salute everything good, and I salute everything evil.'

The Hindus often complain of the bigotry and intolerance of Christianity, and contrast with it the charity and tolerance of Hinduism. And truly it would be difficult to get a wider charity, a broader tolerance, than is expressed in the above line. But this very breadth deprives it of all power for good,—makes the good powerless to prevent or repress the evil. This is the fatal defect of Hinduism. It does not exclude good, but it refuses to acknowledge its exclusive claim. There are in Hindu books passages of unsurpassed beauty and purity even, and which one might almost think expressive of the loftiest theistic worship. Yet these passages can influence but little those who read them when they exist alongside of others as vile as these are noble. Nay, more, they positively hinder the spread of a pure religion. When the teaching of Christ, for instance, is presented to the Hindus, they acknowledge its purity, and they recognise many of His moral precepts as very like what they have been accustomed to be taught. But they have also been accustomed to hear them along with other teaching as different from them as night from day, or in connection with the worship of beings whose whole lives contradicted them. Thus, for what hold morality may have on their minds they are indebted to the conscience which God has given them—not in any way to their religion. In it morality is non-essential; and as Buddhism—looked on as a popular system—may be described as ‘morality without God,’ so Hinduism may be described as ‘God without morality.’

Corresponding with this is the principle of the human mind to which Hinduism appeals. We have seen that Hindu philosophy imitates Buddhism in making knowledge the great instrument of salvation. But in the popular religion blind faith takes the place of knowledge, and the only function ascribed to the latter is to discover how the object of worship, whatever that may be, is one with the Supreme. With the majority, however, even this is not necessary. 'Faith is the great thing' is an axiom that comes naturally to the mouth of a Hindu whenever matters of religion are discussed. Faith in the object of your faith, whatever that may be, is considered the sure way of salvation. No matter how morally bad, no matter how utterly contemptible that in which you believe, have faith in it, and you will gain your end. Trust your idol, trust your penances, trust your works, and all will be well. This is a doctrine taught by others besides Hindus, but in the mouth of these latter it has some reason, for it is consistent with their view of the relation of man to God. They do not ignore knowledge altogether, but they give it quite a subsidiary place. From this point of view, as Buddhism may be described as a system of 'knowledge without faith,' so Hinduism may be described as a system of 'faith without knowledge.'

Thus has Hinduism spread throughout India, not as a reformation, but as a conservation. It has taken advantage of all existing superstitions, however gross, immoral, and criminal, and, supplying

all with a philosophical basis, has crystallised each into a hardness, and given to the whole a solidarity which makes it now doubly difficult to attack any one of them. It has recognised and vindicated the distinctions of class and tribe, freezing all together instead of fusing all together, making different classes of the same village live together with fewer common sympathies and interests than the French and Germans, making patriotism as we understand it an unknown thing, nationality an impossibility for the Hindus till Hinduism be swept from India. The only thing to be said for it is, that it has conserved good as well as evil. The law of caste is more binding than the law of conscience, and where the original custom of a caste has been good, it has been preserved. Many who would not refuse to commit an evil because it is forbidden by God, would refuse because it was forbidden by their caste.<sup>1</sup> Thus the restraints of caste have checked the spread of many vices through some classes of society, have enabled them to look on a vice indulged in by others and excuse them for it as being tolerated by their caste, without feeling tempted to indulge in it themselves. It has also, when applied to trade, begotten a thoroughness and independence of mere money-making which is not to be found in other lands. This has given a certain stamina to the Hindus which we do not find in other idolaters. But the same thing that thus checks change for evil forbids also change for

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Max Müller wrote some time ago on the question, 'Are the Hindus truthful?' That depends on the caste.

good. Change is the one point on which Hinduism is intolerant. Let any one ask a Hindu who has been dilating on the intolerance of Christianity and the tolerance of Hinduism, to tolerate one of his caste-fellows practically carrying out his change of belief by change of conduct—acknowledging the one true God by giving up the worship of his caste gods, acknowledging the brotherhood of man by mingling and eating with those of other castes, and he will find that he has roused an intolerance as fierce and unbending as that of the Spanish Inquisition. Hinduism is essentially a quiescent religion, but it was not to be left undisturbed in its hold in India, and we now proceed to its struggles with other faiths.

## PART III.

### HINDUISM AND MOHAMMEDANISM.



#### CHAPTER X.

THE first hostile faith with which Hinduism had to contend, after its triumph over Buddhism, was Mohammedanism, and the story of this contest is one of the most remarkable and instructive chapters in the history of religion. The struggle was long and arduous, but the main features may be easily apprehended, and as the chief object of our study is rather the relations of Hinduism to Christianity, I will be brief.

Mohammedanism took its rise with the preaching of Mohammed in Arabia in the beginning of the sixth century. It was a strong monotheism, and its brief creed was, 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God.' Its founder was acquainted with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and acknowledged them as inspired, but he maintained the superior authority of the Koran, which he was commissioned to impart to the world. He allowed that Moses and the prophets and Jesus were all prophets sent by God, but he was the last and greatest, and superseded them all. He had in his travels while a young man had occasion to observe the various sects of Christians and the

offensive prominence and almost material interpretation that was given to the doctrine of the Trinity, and he denounced that doctrine as an abomination. He likewise denounced not only all image worship, but the making of images for any purpose, as a sin, though he was obliged to give way to the old Arab superstition of worshipping the Kiblah at Mecca.<sup>1</sup> Salvation, he taught, was to be obtained by works, by holding the true faith, by repeating the above creed, by praying five times daily, by performing daily ablutions, by fasting in the month Ramzan from sunrise to sunset daily, by giving a fortieth of one's goods in charity, by making the pilgrimage to Mecca, and, above all, by dying in war for the propagation of the faith. The morality he inculcated was loose, but it was an improvement on that of the Arabs among whom he lived. He forbade the use of wine ; and, if he sanctioned polygamy and concubinage, he yet in his legislation restrained the licence in which the Arabs had been wont to live. He, however, did not apply the legislation in his own case ; and the licence which he allowed himself, on the plea of his being the prophet of Allah, is the blackest stain on his personal character, and the strongest refutation of his claim to be a prophet. The sinfulness of sin is indeed no part of his

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<sup>1</sup> This is simply a black stone—possibly an aërolite—that is in the Kabah or great Mosque at Mecca. A learned Maulvi seriously maintained to me that its worship was not a breach of the second Commandment, on the ground that it was not the likeness of anything in the heaven above, on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. The same might be said of nearly all the Hindu idols.

system ; repentance, as explained by him, does not imply hatred or renouncement of sin, and this defect becomes more glaring in the teaching of his followers. In Mohammedan theology knowledge takes precedence of holiness, and what we call the fall of man rather raised him in the scale of being, by giving him knowledge.<sup>1</sup> God is thus ultimately made the author of sin in man, and this vice taints and weakens the whole system. Its great merit and its great power is its strong assertion of the Unity of God.

At first its progress was slow, and it was not till Mohammed adopted the sword as a means of conversion, not till the charms of military enthusiasm and political ascendancy were added to those of poetry and eloquence, that his religion became a power. Then it spread with lightning speed. The Arabs, brought by their religion for the first time into the community of nations, and stirred up by their religious enthusiasm to be invincible soldiers, were everywhere victorious. After victory their propaganda was simple enough—to the ‘people of the book,’ the Christians and Jews, they gave the choice—become Mohammedans or pay tribute ; to idolaters — become Mohammedans or die. A political ascendancy thus accompanied Mohammedanism wherever it spread, which proved an irresistible argument for all those whose faith was otherwise weak ; and when they had once joined the profession of ‘the faithful,’ the charms of war

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.



and conquest transformed them into zealous propagandists of the new faith. Mohammedanism is a religion of the sword, and only by the sword did it spread and hold its place among civilised nations. But this must not blind us to the fact that it was its monotheistic creed which nerved it to wield the sword, which conquered some of its own conquerors, and which is now winning to its standard many of the savage tribes of Africa, and low castes of India.

Shortly after the death of Mohammed the Arabs made some incursions into India, but it was not till the beginning of the eighth century that they made any serious attempt on it. In the year 705 A.D., Walid conquered Sind, and in subsequent years his armies advanced as far as the Ganges. His general, Kasim, conquered Gujerat, and attacked Chitor, the capital of Mewar. But here the progress of the victorious Moslem was stayed. They were defeated and driven out of India by Bappa, the founder of the race of kings who to this day sit on the Mewar throne. It was not for a hundred years thereafter that they again attempted its subjugation, and then again they were encountered by the rajah of the same kingdom, at the head of the chivalry of India, who flocked to his banner, and, after being defeated twenty-four times, were once more fairly driven out of the land. For a hundred and fifty years again the Mohammedans desisted from serious attempts, but, in the beginning of the eleventh century, the celebrated Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India twelve times, and was everywhere victorious, compelling the native princes to submit, or driving them from

their thrones. He left traces of his victorious progress in the idols he broke and the temples he plundered. But his career was like that of the hurricane, passing through the land but not remaining in it; he left no mark in India but the terror of a great name. Within fifteen years after his death the Hindus had driven his successors beyond the Sutlej; and for a hundred and fifty years longer India remained the *Arya vartta*, the land of the pure Aryas. It was not till the end of the twelfth century that the victories of Mohammed Ghori established Mohammedan supremacy in India.

Thus, while the Mohammedan power had spread with unmatched rapidity over Syria and Persia, along the north of Africa, and into Spain, it for six hundred years failed to overcome the compact resistance offered by India. But the cause of this is not far to seek. In the lands where it first spread, Christianity had sapped the old faiths, and had in its turn been so much contaminated by them that its pristine vigour had decayed. It inspired its followers neither with the tenacity of an ancient faith nor with the enthusiasm of a new one, so that they succumbed easily to the fresh vigour of Islam. In India, on the other hand, Hinduism had just triumphed under the great Brahmanical revival. After having, as we have seen, been nearly quenched by Buddhism, it had in its turn risen up and extirpated it from the Peninsula. The Hindus were thus attached to their

faith with all the strength which pride in its antiquity and enthusiasm on account of its fresh triumphs could inspire; and when a head arose to combine the various states, to give unity to their strength and direction to their valour, they proved too strong even for the fanaticism of Islam.

What, then, were the causes that led to the triumph of Mohammedanism and the political overthrow of Hinduism? On the one hand, Mohammedanism had won those warlike tribes in Central Asia whence all successful invasions of India have started. The invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni showed what they could accomplish, and it only required political genius to be combined with military genius to effect a permanent conquest of the land. On the other hand, India was not only divided among different states, which at times waged internecine war with one another, and left them weak in presence of the foreign invader; but the same causes were at work then which still make it possible for a handful of British to hold the Continent. Society was broken up into castes, which prevented in any of the states anything like national solidarity. The warrior caste ruled and fought, and the Brahmans prayed and meditated; but the peasants tilled their fields and tended their flocks, the merchants traded and lent money, and the various craftsmen followed their various occupations, without feeling themselves called on to strike a blow for the defence of their country. They might prefer one government to another, but so long as their caste was not seriously injured

by change of rulers, they had no need to bestir themselves.

It was towards the end of the twelfth century when these various causes combined to give Mohammedanism a permanent settlement in India. The two greatest of the states of North India, Delhi and Kanauj, had engaged in a war for supremacy which left them both a prey to Mohammed Ghori, the real founder of Mohammedan power in India. By the close of the century he had conquered all North India, and established the military supremacy of his faith throughout that part of the continent.

But though the Mohammedans had triumphed, Mohammedanism had not. Two buildings raised by Ghori are typical of the work he did,—the mosque in the Lal Koti at Delhi, and that of the *Arhāi din ka Jhompra*<sup>1</sup> at Ajmer. Both of these mosques are built of the ruins of Hindu temples. In each there is a splendid screen of red sandstone in front, with five arches adorned with nothing but verses of the Koran, carved in a way to produce the most effective architectural ornamentation to be seen in India. Behind it the roof of the mosque is supported on pillars taken from Hindu temples, with all the carvings of the Hindu legends and Hindu gods upon them still. These mosques are evidently the work of a man of a strong religious faith, who wished to raise in stone a monument of the triumph of his creed over the idolatrous faith which it had conquered. But they are symbols of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Two-and-a-half-day house ;' said to have been built in that time.

what the Mohammedan empire in India became,—a splendid, imposing front of Mohammedan power, which the outer world saw, but behind which remained all the gods, the castes, the superstitions of Hinduism, untouched.

The first zeal of the Mohammedans had so far abated that they admitted idolaters too to the payment of tribute, and this the Hindus were content to pay where they could not throw off the yoke of the oppressor. Many Hindu kings maintained their independence, and made war against the invaders with varying success, till at last the genius of Akbar established the Mohammedan dominion on a secure basis about 1560 A.D.

This basis, however, consisted in depriving Mohammedanism of its political privileges. He abolished the tax on infidels, which Hindus who would not profess Mohammedanism had to pay; and thus made all his subjects equal in the eye of the law, no difference being allowed on account of their religious creed. He also united himself by marriage with some of the noblest royal houses of India, and thus attached them to his throne. He had no very firm religious creed himself, and set himself, with the indifference of a philosopher and the zeal of a politician, to assimilate the religious beliefs of his subjects. He made one of those futile attempts which have been made from time to time to form an eclectic religion, which is to combine the excellences of all, and ends by finding acceptance with none. Akbar was not more

successful than others who have made similar attempts, but he was more successful in mitigating the religious antagonisms of his subjects. While indifferent to the special claims of Mohammed, he fostered the lower forms of his religion, and especially the worship of saints,—a corruption that had long been gaining ground in Islam. The tombs of saints all over the country were sought out, mosques erected over them, and legends with regard to them invented or garnished up. This policy was so far successful that the Hindus did begin to worship many of their saints, and unite with the Mohammedans in paying them reverence on their great festivals. The political result, too, was obtained in so far as the stability of his own throne was concerned, both creeds uniting to support it; but the effect on Mohammedanism itself was disastrous. Mohammedanism, as a quiescent, non-proselytising religion, could only become corrupt and rotten. The effect of all this policy on the mass of Mohammedans was to deprive their religious sentiment of that intolerance which constituted its strength. Its moral power was gone when it ceased to be intolerant.

Yet this policy preserved the Mogul empire in its integrity for upwards of a hundred years, till the principle and policy of intolerance revived in Aurangzēb. He reimposed the poll-tax on infidels, and thereby again branded all his Hindu subjects with inferiority on account of their religious beliefs. This alienated them, and ultimately drove them into rebellion. He decreed the destruction

of idols; and the prince of Mewar offered 'the heads of one hundred thousand Rajputs' for the defence of one of the most popular of these idols, thus making it the symbol of Hindu nationality. The rebellion often seemed crushed, but it maintained itself with the vitality which only a struggle for religion could inspire, and imparted in turn a vitality to that religion which only exertion, sacrifice, and suffering could beget. The Hindus were driven to emulate the intolerance of their opponents—shaving the Kazis, destroying the mosques, throwing the Korans into wells, and forbidding the call to prayer, wherever they had power. This gave room for the Mahratta power to rise in the south—a Hindu power, though based on plunder; and when Aurangzeb, the ablest of the Moguls, died in 1707, he saw the empire breaking up on every side. About thirty years later it received its death-blow from another Mohammedan power, the Persians, under Nadir Shah. Thereafter the Hindu states either assumed their old independence or established new dominions; while the Mohammedan emperor, still their nominal head, became more and more a mere puppet in their hands. The conquest of the Mahratta and Pindari powers in the beginning of this century by the English, rescued the empire of Delhi from utter destruction, and gave the emperors a further lease of existence as vassals of Great Britain. But the part he took in the Mutiny of 1857 led to the last of them being deposed and sent to end his days as a convict in a penal settlement. Of the native princes now in alliance with the British Government, only one



or two of any importance are Mohammedans: of the 287 millions who inhabit India, about 57 millions belong to that religion. Of these, about 20 millions in Bengal are the descendants of the lowest class of Hindus, who adopted this faith to gain a higher social standing, and the rest are descendants of the old Patthan and Mogul conquerors. But they are nearly all now in a low social position as compared with the Hindus, and, until lately, were much more backward in taking advantage of the educational benefits which the British offer, though in this there has latterly been, as we shall see, some improvement. That is the external history of Mohammedanism in India.

Turning to the internal history, the first inquiry is as to the effect which it has had on Hinduism itself, what modification it has produced on the faith of the Hindus; and the answer is, Almost none. It seems a strange conclusion to come to that a powerful religion like Mohammedanism should have been for six centuries in India, and produced no effect on the belief of the majority of its population. Yet such is undoubtedly the fact. The chief instrument of Mohammedan conversion is the sword: this may produce an outer acquiescence, it may even ultimately force multitudes to adopt alike the profession and faith of Mohammedanism, but it cannot produce any modification in a hostile faith, least of all could it do so in India. While war and conquest and violence were



raging about it, Hinduism was steadily developing itself.

‘The East bow’d low before the blast,  
In patient deep disdain ;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.’

The only difference we can now trace is that the theory and system of Bopa Deva,<sup>1</sup> which before the Mohammedan conquest was accepted only by the Brahmans, has now pervaded nearly every caste of Hindus. Take any of the points of difference between Mohammedanism and Hinduism, and it will be found that in these Hinduism is stronger and more intolerant than it was before its rival appeared in India. Image worship is as general and as devoutly believed in, and caste as tyrannical as before the Mussulman conquerors set their foot in India, while the pantheistic principles on which they are justified are much more extensively diffused. The doctrine of a Supreme God above and beyond Vishnu, Siva, and the other deities, which some have looked upon as the effect of Mohammedan influence, is a result rather of Hindu philosophy. It was developed before the Mohammedans entered India, and even the theistic protest against pantheism was anterior to their conquest.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Ramanuja lived certainly not later than the beginning of the twelfth century, while the Mohammedan conquest took place at the end of it. If we place Bopa Deva in the thirteenth century, as Lassen does, we have the remarkable fact of pantheistic idolatry developing and strengthening itself in the face of victorious monotheists.

In some of the sects which have been developed from the last-named movement we no doubt do see the influence of the foreign faith; but the general effect of Mohammedanism on Hinduism has been rather of a deteriorating character. The greater licentiousness of its followers has led to the greater degradation of women among the Hindus. They have not now the same freedom and respect given to them which the older books of India show they once had, and this change the Hindus attribute to the licence of their Mohammedan conquerors. An indirect effect of this has been the increase of those secret sects which are the greatest stain on modern Hinduism.

The bad influence of Mohammedanism on Hinduism is, however, even less than the bad influence which Hinduism has exercised on Mohammedanism. It has now degenerated, in most of its adherents in India, to be little more than a caste outside the pale of Hinduism. They have their caste rules, as strong and as binding as their Hindu brethren. Their priests repeat the verses of the Koran, as the Brahmans repeat the hymns of the Vedas, with just as little idea of their meaning. Their worship of Allah—the one God—is a mere form; their real worship is paid to the saints: offerings are brought to their tombs, or gifts given to the priests who officiate in the mosques erected in their honour. Their religion is known in India as saint worship,<sup>1</sup> while that of the Hindus is image worship,<sup>2</sup> and this for the majority of both creeds is the

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<sup>1</sup> Pir parasti.

<sup>2</sup> But parasti.

practical difference. Even in this, however, they are not exclusive; the Hindus join cordially in the festivals in honour of some of the greater Mohammedan saints, and in some places the Mohammedans join in those in honour of Hindu idols.

These two religions have thus settled down beside one another on terms of mutual charity and *toleration*. This does not imply any great change or deterioration in Hinduism, for its principles admit every belief as truth, every religion as a way of salvation. All that it requires is acknowledgment of the same principle from other religions, and this is the position which it has practically forced Mohammedanism to assume in India. But such a position is utterly opposed to the principles and claims of the latter religion; and in forcing Mohammedanism to accept it, Hinduism has undoubtedly gained the triumph.

It must not be supposed that Mohammedanism has accepted this position without a struggle. On the contrary, it has had its outbreak of MAHDISM, which for nearly a generation it required all the power, first of the Sikh and then of the English Government, to deal with. The Mahdi<sup>1</sup> himself was not in this case a man of great force of character

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<sup>1</sup> The Mahdi is, according to Mohammedan theology, the twelfth Imām, or Great Leader, who is still living, but invisible, and who will appear shortly before the day of judgment. When any one assumes a prophetic character, and tries to rouse a population with any success, he claims to be the Mahdi, or the claim is put forward for him, and if it is accepted by the Mohammedans, it rouses their enthusiasm tenfold.

or power of leadership. But some strong men took advantage of his claims, as his ministers while he was alive, and as his caliphs after his death, to rouse the faithful followers of Islam to fight with and conquer the Kāfirs or infidels. Their usual plan of action was to proclaim a *jihād* or holy war; they summoned all who could fight to repair to the Himalayan frontier, there to unite with the Mohammedan tribes who preserved their independence, and to invade the territory ruled by the infidel. They began this system against the kingdom of the Sikhs, under Runjeet Singh, and after its conquest by the English they continued it against the English Government. The Mohammedans throughout India, especially in Bengal, were compelled, under the threat of religious penalties,—under the fear of being boycotted,—to pay a tax to these caliphs; and for some time it came in with as much regularity as the taxes paid to the English Government. At the same time, as many as could go were requisitioned for the holy war; and to that war nearly every Mohammedan village sent its quota of *shahīds* or martyrs.

Their action was spasmodic. It was impossible to maintain a constant struggle on these terms, and during the mutiny in 1857-58 they seem to have been entirely quiescent, otherwise it is difficult to say what might have taken place at that crisis. Subsequently to it, at least two frontier wars were the fruit of this great conspiracy—those of 1863 and 1868. The former especially taxed all the powers of the Government of the North-West

Provinces, and was not brought to a successful conclusion till dissensions among the tribes had come to aid the British arms.

The English Government at last became aware of the great conspiracy that had spread through its dominions. A series of state trials followed the wars that the conspiracy had stirred up, and the leading conspirators paid for their loyalty to their faith, or their disloyalty to the Government, on the scaffold. At last the Mohammedans, or those of them who were not fanatical, became wearied of the struggle. There seemed to be no end to the demands made on them for subsidies, and the result of the contest seemed as hopeless as ever. Besides this, the state trials caused fresh alarm, that those who maintained the war by help sent from home might do so at the cost of their lives, as well as those who went to the frontier to engage in war. They therefore sent to three of the chief Mohammedan colleges, asking for an opinion as to whether the principles of their faith required them to rebel against the Government—the Government not being Mussulman, but Mussulmans having freedom to carry out their religion in everything except some details, such as not having liberty to put to death any Mohammedan who changed his religion. The three colleges all pronounced against rebellion, and counselled submission. Since then the English Government has had no trouble with Mohammedan intrigues.

Meanwhile a counter movement has been gaining

strength. The leader in this has been Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan of Aligarh. He first distinguished himself by a commentary on the Bible, written in English and Urdu. It was about the time when Bishop Colenso was startling the orthodox world by his criticism of the Pentateuch. The Mohammedan commentator replied to some of the criticisms; but a pretty broad dogmatic rationalism pervaded the commentary, which was not continued beyond the first few chapters of Genesis. The tendency of the book was to minimise the differences between the Mohammedan and Christian religions. The same tendency is visible in the influence of the Aligarh Institute, which he subsequently founded, which seeks to promote European culture among the Mohammedans, and to lead them to seek power by serving the English Government rather than by opposing it. They are fast becoming the most loyal of our fellow-subjects in India, and are living at peace with the Hindus, unmolested and unmolesting. What the future of Mohammedanism may be under these new conditions it would be hazardous to predict. It has shown signs of progress during the past decade, but it is clear that the opportunity of its becoming the religion of India has passed. Hinduism has vanquished it by the sheer force of inertia.

*Hindu-Mohammedan Sects.*

I have intimated that while Hinduism generally has not been much modified by Mohammedanism,

several reforming movements have markedly experienced its influence. These are generally termed PANTHS, which means literally paths, and when applied to religion means sects, or more exactly orders. The rise of these panths is the most marked result of the contact of Hinduism with Mohammedanism.

The first of these is the KABĪR PANTH, or order of Kabīr, who lived about the beginning of the sixteenth century. He was a weaver, and the preponderance of evidence is in favour of his having been originally a Mussulman; but he early became a disciple of Ramananda, and as such would be considered a Vaishnava. He was a man of no education; he does not seem to have written anything; but his teaching, communicated mostly in verse, was written down by his disciples. He did not study the theology either of Mohammedanism or of Hinduism, but he learned the main principles of these religions by discussion with their teachers. He fused them in a system of his own, in which book revelation was set at nought, and the inner light taken as the supreme arbiter. His system, in its leading features regarding God, the human soul, transmigration, and liberation, it is impossible to distinguish from Hindu pantheism, though he has been called a Unitarian Theist. But he denounced caste, denounced the idea of a mediator; used Mohammedan as well as Hindu names for God, and assimilated Mohammedan and even Christian ideas as well as Hindu ones. His chief power seems to have been his popular gifts. 'He was emphatically



a man of the people; and one of the first to bring down a form of mystical theism to the level of popular comprehension, from the lofty platform of the schools.’<sup>1</sup> After his death both Mussulmans and Hindus claimed his body; and the tradition goes, that as they were disputing, a voice bade them look for the body, and it was found that it had disappeared, and a number of white flowers were in its place. Now, however, his followers are generally looked on as a sect of Hindus. Any whom I have met avowed themselves as such, and observed caste as much as any others.

Kabir is said to have had twelve disciples, who founded twelve separate panths. Two of the most important of these are the Sat-nāmis and the Dādu Panthis, founded by Dādu, a cotton cleaner of Ahmedabad, about the beginning of the seventeenth century. These and the other sects have now the position of orders rather than castes of Hinduism. A different position has been taken by that of NANAK, another of his disciples, who became the founder of the SIKH religion.

The word Sikh means simply disciple. Nanak was the *Guru* or teacher, his followers were *Sikhs* or disciples. He flourished, like Kabir, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. His teaching is moulded on his master’s, but is even more pantheistic, and except in the denunciation of idolatry, not very different from ordinary Vaishnavism. He too tried to unite the Hindus and Mohammedans in

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<sup>1</sup> Ram Chandra Rose, M.A., in *Indian Evangelical Review*.



one faith, though the sect he founded was destined to become the most bitter foe of the latter. His writings were gathered together in a book called the GRANTH, which is more a collection of sayings—largely those of Kabir—than anything original.

He died in 1538, and nine other Gurus in succession followed him, under whom the Sikhs became more organised, and began to aspire to political power. The tenth, GOVIND SINGH, sought to found an independent dominion. He abolished all distinctions of caste among his followers, required them to obey him implicitly as their great Guru, and under him the subordinate Gurus; to be a nation of warriors, to wage perpetual warfare with the Mussulmans, and never to turn their back on the foe. The result was a series of internecine wars between the Mohammedans and the Sikhs. After the break-up of the Mohammedan empire, the Sikhs, under Runjit Singh, became masters of the Panjab, and after his death they engaged in a war with the British power, which resulted in the annexation of the Panjab and the suppression of the Sikh nationality. Under wise government they have become loyal subjects, and the regiments raised from them are among the bravest and most trustworthy in the native army.

Govind Singh at his death did not appoint any Guru to succeed him, but told them to look to the Granth—to which he had added a supplement—as their Guru. This has led to what is the most marked feature of the Sikh religion—Bibliolatry. The Honourable Book is the object of worship in all Sikh temples. It is dressed in expensive cloth, laid

aside carefully in its bed at night like one of the Hindu idols, and when brought out, receives divine honours before it is read. Next to the book, the Guru or master is honoured, and has great power over his disciples. In doctrine they are very little different from the Vaishnavas. In morality, except in soldierly virtues, they are said to be even below the average of Hindus. They are divided into twelve sects, some of which are already relapsing into image worship, and in process of time it is not unlikely that they will all take their place in the ranks of all-absorbing Hinduism.

Meanwhile, Sikhism may fairly claim to be a distinct religion; and it is remarkable as being the only eclectic creed which has ever become the religion of a large body of disciples, and welded them into a nation. Even it proves the rule. It is not its eclectic creed which gives Sikhism its vital power over its followers, but the sectarian and patriotic dogmas inculcated by Nanak and Govind. These gave it power so long as the power of fighting and conquest remained, but now that that is lost, and it has only its eclecticism and its bibliolatry to fall back on, it seems to have lost its vitality. The last census shows its numbers to be 1,907,836, an increase during the decade of 54,410, or less than three per cent.

This may be noticed in conclusion, that all attempts at compromise between Hinduism and Mohammedanism have ended by their followers becoming practically Hindus.

## PART IV.

# HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

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### CHAPTER XI.

#### THEIR AFFINITIES AND ANTAGONISMS.

HINDUISM has thus triumphed over two of the great missionary religions of the world—that of Buddha and that of Mohammed ; the contest has now begun with the third—that of Christ. It is not the present century, however, that has witnessed the first struggles of that contest : two of these have already taken place. Primitive Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity have both assayed the conquest of India. Only in the present century has Protestant Christianity fairly girded itself for the task.

There are various traditions of the gospel having been preached in India in the first centuries of the Christian era. There is one thoroughly authenticated, of Pantænus being sent thither from Alexandria during the period of missionary fervour in the Church there, towards the close of the second century. All direct fruits of these labours, if there were any, have entirely disappeared. But there are passages in later Sanskrit and in popular Hindi literature which show traces of contact with Christian tradition and Christian doctrine. These have

now been so assimilated by Hinduism as to make it doubly difficult to impress them afresh on the minds of the Hindus.

A later movement has had more permanent results. Some Nestorian Christians from Persia seem to have settled, chiefly as traders, in the southern part of India, both on the eastern and western coasts. Those on the eastern coast do not seem at any time to have been active, and dwindled and disappeared, surviving just long enough for the Portuguese to serve themselves heirs of their traditions. Those on the Malabar coast made efforts to evangelise the natives, and soon gathered a large number of converts. But they seem to have entered into alliance with native states, to have come into contact with the Brahmans, and to have been brought to accept the quiescent position which these latter are always fain to assign to any other faith. They have for centuries settled down alongside of the Hindus on principles of mutual toleration, with the consequent loss of all expansive power.

With the Portuguese settlements in India came the missionaries of the Church of Rome, chief among whom was the devoted Xavier. They baptized numbers of the natives, but they did not accompany the baptism with efficient instruction in religion: indeed, in most cases, there seems to have been none at all. The descendants of these converts are now mingled with the descendants of the first Portuguese settlers, and occupy very much the position of one of the castes of India—Christian, but not Hindu. The Hindus attend their saints' festivals, as they

are often present at the festivals in honour of the Hindu gods. They have not a high character in India, and are called by the Hindus *Kristān*—a name which has come to have such a bad reputation, that Protestant missionaries are fain to call themselves and their converts *Isāi*, or *Masīhī*.

Thus we see, that in both these cases Christianity has been reduced to the same position of passiveness and paralysis alongside of Hinduism as has Mohammedanism. It too has been conquered by the inertia of the native faith.

The work of Protestant missions in India is now being prosecuted with growing vigour. They began early in last century with the Danish missionaries Ziegenbalg and Plutsch. England took up the work towards the close of the century, when Carey, Marshman, and Ward began the work at Serampore. Since then, each decade has seen a fresh development of missionary activity, till now we may say that Protestant Christendom has set itself to the conversion of India to Christ with an intensity and a purpose beyond what it has shown in any previous enterprise.

Is this a work to be undertaken with hope or with doubt—one which it would be wise to persevere in, or to abandon? The command of our Lord,—His marching orders, as the Duke of Wellington said to a somewhat sceptical chaplain,—‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,’ is a sufficient warrant for the Church to continue her work, a sufficient guarantee that the

truth which He embodied, and which He bade His disciples spread, is the best suited for the Hindu as for all nations.

But it is well also carefully to examine the conditions of the contest: whether Christianity really has a message to teach India; why former efforts to teach it have failed; by what means we may best commend it; and what reasons we have, from the past history and present state of Hinduism, to hope for success. In conducting this examination we will first compare the principles of the Christian and of the Hindu faiths, their points of approach and their points of antagonism; then look at the attempts that are being made to reform Hinduism independently of Christianity; and lastly, consider the attitude which the Church must preserve to secure final triumph.

Here, first, we must notice that *there are elements of religion common to both Hinduism and Christianity.*

④ The sentiment of dependence on a higher Power and ② the teaching of conscience exist more or less strongly in all men, leading them to learn the lessons of nature, and prompting a worship recognised as true by true religion. 'He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'<sup>1</sup> 'The Gentiles, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: who show the works of the law written in their hearts.'<sup>2</sup> In the literature of every nation that has produced a

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 14, 15.

literature we find these sentiments expressed—man giving utterance to those feelings of reverence, trust, and truth, which show that the image of God within him, though defaced, is not destroyed. In the literature of no heathen nation, probably, is this found more abundantly than in that of the Hindus. It contains multitudes not only of stray verses, but even whole hymns, in which a Christian might express many of his feelings of devotion.<sup>1</sup> All these Christianity gladly welcomes as proofs of its congruity with natural religion, but they are not Christianity. Hinduism also uses them, but they are not Hinduism.

They are cries of the human conscience, expressions of the religious wants which all men feel. But the distinctive character of any religion, its practical value, is seen in the response which it gives to these cries, in the satisfaction which it offers to these wants, in the help which it gives man to lead a godly life.

In speaking of the religion of the Vedas, I took occasion to contrast it with that of Abraham, and pointed out that, while in the former we have an expression of the religious wants of the human heart—a yearning after God and His favour, in the latter we have the consciousness of the reply to these wants—a conscious communion with God and enjoyment of His favour. We have seen how the Hindus, following the lead of the Vedas, have sought to find a response that would satisfy their

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E, *Natural Religion in Indian Literature.*



craving, and how complete the failure has been. Among the children of Abraham, on the other hand, the great truth committed to Abraham received fuller development, till at last it was embodied in Jesus Christ; and it is the message He has brought, which His Church through its missions is now offering to India, as a full satisfaction for those needs which Hinduism, like other religions, has expressed, but failed to satisfy.

What, then, is the message which Christianity brings to India? 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations,'<sup>1</sup> was the commission Christ gave to His disciples after He rose from the dead. These words show how He had measured the religious needs of the world. Whatever other religions may teach, they do not teach these truths—even independent of the name in which they are to be preached. When we find them taught, we may compare the names in which they are taught. But Hinduism denies both. The great truth which Christianity has to teach India is the FORGIVENESS of sins; the great duty which it has to teach is REPENTANCE from sin.

This antagonism in the two faiths is a consequence of the higher principles of their teaching, which I have already pointed out. Christianity teaches the personality; Hinduism, the impersonality, of God. Christianity makes holiness an essential of true religion, Hinduism makes it an accident. These distinctions, carried along the

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 47.



whole line of their teaching, make their points of approach points of antagonism, with the practical outcome that the one affirms and the other denies alike the need and the fact of the forgiveness of sins. Under these antagonisms are ranged, in each creed, doctrines which seem almost counterparts one of the other.

Both religions teach that SALVATION is the chief end of man. The word<sup>1</sup> which the Hindus use is that used by the translators of the Bible to express the Christian idea. Salvation may also be said, in both systems, to include the idea of liberation or deliverance; but in Hinduism the liberation sought is deliverance from personal existence; in Christianity, deliverance from sin.

The Hindu idea of salvation is that of a man crossing a broad stream. He occasionally steps on rocks, fords shallows, swims through currents; he may sometimes be swept back from the shore towards which he is struggling, sometimes borne nearer to it; but the stream is something entirely distinct from him: he looks merely to getting through it and out of it; he does not look to any change in himself. The Christian idea is rather that of a man who is smitten with a deadly disease, from which he seeks to be quit. The disease affects his whole frame, prevents him acting vigorously, menaces him with death. His object is to get the disease out of him—to be restored to a healthy natural state. Christianity teaches that

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<sup>1</sup> Mukti—Liberation.

man is sinful; for it teaches that there is a personal God, whose holy law man has failed to obey. Deliverance from this failure, from this sin, and a consequent eternal life of holy service, it teaches to be salvation. Hinduism, as we have seen, is debarred from this conception, for it denies a personal God; denying Him, it can have no place for His holy law, and consequently sin as such is excluded also. Hinduism accordingly teaches that salvation is not deliverance from sin any more than deliverance from holiness. Sin, as we conceive it, is not sin any more than the current that sweeps the swimmer into danger is sin. It, in fact, ought to have no place in the Hindu religion at all. But it has a place. Neither the word nor the idea of sin is strange to the Hindu. It does not need any long argument to show him that it must be punished. Why is this? Simply because the higher principles of Hinduism will not square with human conscience and consciousness. They are at enmity with the natural law written on the hearts of all men, as much as with Christianity. Hinduism has tried to escape from this antagonism by allowing sin as an inferior calamity, and deliverance from it as an inferior stage of salvation, but the fact that it admits sin at all is fatal to its conception of the higher salvation.

But it is when we come to the WAY OF SALVATION that the resemblances and contrasts of the two religions become most striking. In both we find the idea of vicarious atonement, of the incarnation,

and of a holy life now, leading to a life beyond death. In the Christian faith these are all united in Christ, whose person gives to them a harmony, and a fulness of grace and truth, which man has, since His appearance, been ever studying, but never able fully to measure. In Hinduism these truths, severed one from the other as well as from their true principle, have become corrupted and powerless, as limbs severed from the living body.

It has been said that the most distinctive doctrine of Christianity is that of VICARIOUS ATONEMENT for sin; but this is also a doctrine of Hinduism. In Christianity it is the vicarious atonement which springs from forgiveness; in Hinduism, that which springs from non-forgiveness.

It has been objected to the Christian doctrine, by others as well as by Hindu apologists, that it is inconsistent with justice and inconsistent with free forgiveness; but it is the necessary outcome of free forgiveness, and therefore the necessary fulfilment of justice. The prayer which Christ taught His disciples, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' is one which expresses fully man's sense of need, and the plea on which it may be satisfied. We are conscious that we can, without any violation of justice, forgive our debtors; we ask our Father who is in heaven to forgive us our debts, with the conviction that He can do so for us with as little violation of justice. But what do we do when we forgive our debtors? We do not forgive them by making them pay their debts, but by cancelling them and bearing the

whole burden of the loss ourselves. We put ourselves in their place in so far as the debt is concerned. *Forgiveness is self-substitution.* And when we ask God to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, we ask Him to bear the burden of our sins, as we bear the loss of the debt we forgive; to substitute Himself for us, as we substitute ourselves for the debtors we forgive. Only those who deny that God is our Father in heaven can consistently deny that He can forgive our sins; only those who deny that He can forgive us as we forgive our debtors can consistently deny vicarious atonement for sin.

It is when we come to realise what sin and its forgiveness cost God, that we are apt to shrink from the consequences of our prayer for forgiveness. The teaching of Christ Himself is, that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoso believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life;'<sup>1</sup> that He came 'to give His life a ransom for many.'<sup>2</sup> The logic of our prayer for forgiveness is that God Himself must bear our sins; the teaching of the gospel is that Christ has borne them. In this there would be contradiction if it were not that Christ is God. Our sins are sins against Him as truly as against the Father, and their consequences to Him are a revelation of their consequences to the Father. The sacrifice of the Father in giving up the Son is not less than that of the Son in giving Himself. We might not have imagined such a result when we asked God to

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<sup>1</sup> John iii. 16.<sup>2</sup> Matt. xx. 28.

forgive our sins, but that was because we did not realise what sin was. Jesus Christ is the revelation alike of what man's sin means, and how entirely God has fulfilled man's prayer, 'Forgive us our debts.'

In Hinduism, ever since Buddha's time, the atonement for sin has been sought for in the doctrine of transmigration. But this is practically vicarious atonement, for the element of consciousness separates the person who sins from the person who suffers.<sup>1</sup> He is said to be the same, but he does not know who or what he was before, or what the sins were whose penalty he is now suffering. There is thus a real substitution, but it is quite involuntary on both sides. The Hindu is both the atoner and the atoned for. What he suffers now he suffers on account of sins committed by himself in a previous birth, that is, by another; and these sufferings he has no choice but to endure. Nay, further, the Hindus are thoroughly consistent in recognising that continuing in sin is the punishment of sin, for they say that the very sins a man now commits are punishments of previous, that is, of another's sins; and he cannot but commit them. Their punishment, again, he cannot bear in his present birth if he would; they must be borne by him in another birth, when the loss of all consciousness of the present has made him, in fact, another

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<sup>1</sup> Madame Blavatzky has drawn a distinction for which Hindu philosophy should be eternally grateful to her. She says that it is the same *individual* who suffers, but not the same *person*.

person. But not only does he thus involuntarily atone for another's sin, he also involuntarily atones for another's virtue. His present happiness is the reward of a previous person's good deeds, his present good deeds will be rewarded to some future person. In all this there is an absence of that amount of justice and moral stimulus, which the offer of remission on the one side and the call to repentance on the other, the action of the will and the sense of responsibility, secure in the Christian system ; sin is not made exceeding sinful, but merely a misfortune, differing accidentally from virtue ; the sense of responsibility is destroyed, the power of the will annihilated, the discipline of suffering lost ; the work is never completed or approaching completion, but goes on through an unending series of atonements. Thus the Hindu doctrine, trying to escape vicarious atonement, has only imposed one of iron necessity, instead of one of free offer and free acceptance ; one which, instead of being a stimulus to man to struggle against sin and for holiness, is rather a dead weight, tending to make him look on all such struggle as hopeless.

In the two religions we have also the doctrine of INCARNATION, and in both it is in keeping with that of the atonement for sin. The teaching of the Bible is that 'the Word was God ;' 'was made flesh, and dwelt among us ;' that He who was born as Jesus of Nazareth was God, the Son of God ; that He lived the life of a perfect man, and in His death, by the sacrifice of Himself, He once for all

put away sin. There is in this a realisation of the truth, to a dim perception of which we have seen that Brahmanism attained in its early stages, that if there is to be atonement for sin, the Substitute must be God Himself; or, in simpler words, that if there is to be forgiveness, the Forgiver must bear the cost.

Without the revelation of Christ, mankind could never have realised this or trusted it. The declaration of God to men, that He forgave their sins, could never have brought peace to them, unless He had made manifest to them in a way that they could realise—if they could not fully understand—that His forgiveness was a fact, and that all the consequences of that forgiveness He had Himself undertaken. No doubt, we could conceive of all this being done without God coming in the likeness of man; but without that we could not conceive of man knowing it, realising it, and trusting it.

There are other considerations, such as the fitness that the atonement should be made also in the person of one of the race for whom the atonement is made, which show that the gospel plan is the best suited to the wants of man. It has satisfied various views which man has taken of God—such as the legal view, which looks on God as a righteous Lawgiver, who could not forgive a transgression of His law without first satisfying the requirements of His own law. This is a hard way of saying that no one can truly forgive, without bearing all the consequences of the transgression he forgives in so far as they affect himself. And too much promin-



ence given to this aspect of the atonement has had the effect of repelling many earnest minds, who have recoiled from this forensic presentation of God's dealings with man. The great truth which gives any reality to such presentations is that God forgives. But, on the other hand, forgiveness which shuns all the consequences of forgiveness, is no forgiveness at all. In Jesus Christ, God has shown the world that His forgiveness is a reality of which not one consequence has been shunned. This is why to the command, 'Believe in God,' the gospel adds the command, 'Believe in Christ.' The former is the duty of man as man; the latter is the duty of man as a sinner. Trust is the fit relation of the creature to the Creator; the gospel says, Carry that same trust into the very position in which you have been placed by sin.

In Hinduism, on the other hand, as we have seen that the doctrine of vicarious atonement, separated from that of the Incarnation, is contradictory and powerless; so, too, in that system, the doctrine of the Incarnation, disconnected with that of vicarious atonement, is meaningless and contemptible.

No such connection could exist when man had to atone for his own sin in a reproduction of his own self. The Hindu conception of the Incarnation is, therefore, only an evidence of the aspiration of the human soul after God, and of its inability to supply that want by any fiction of its own. It could not realise a work done once and done perfectly. The same deity, as we have seen, is said to have become



incarnate many times, and in animals as well as in man. On each occasion it is to put right something that has gone wrong in the ordinary history of the world: to destroy a dangerous tribe, to kill a tyrannical king, to do deeds that might have been as well done by men, and less wonderful than many that have been done by men. There is no conception of the god in any of them bearing for man what man could not bear himself. His very incarnations are spoken of as the consequences of deeds he had himself performed; one was the fruit of sins he had committed, another of a curse that had been pronounced on him. Yet even to such a being human instinct has led his worshippers to turn for deliverance. Hopeless themselves of being able to reach the end of their long chain of births, they look to him to deliver them from it, but not by delivering them from sin, only by so absorbing them in himself, that they may perform sin and holiness, and reap joy or sorrow in him, till all such things shall have ceased. Even for the attainment of this boon they have no security. It is not even pretended that any one of their Avatars, by triumphing over death, has given evidence of his abiding power to save his worshippers.

It is on these two points, vicarious atonement and the Divine Incarnation, that Hinduism comes into sharpest antagonism to Christianity. In Christianity they are both linked together by the great purpose of forgiveness of sins, which they bring before the mind with all the assurance of reality.

In Hinduism, which denies the forgiveness of sins, there is no pledge of accomplishment of the one, or of any purpose in the other. But as, after all, the influence of these principles in practical life is the most important thing, let us further contrast the two systems in their bearing on the PRESENT LIFE and on the hopes they give for a LIFE TO COME.

In regard to the present life, we must look at the teaching of each religion with regard to ourselves and with regard to others. With regard to ourselves, Hinduism and Christianity alike teach that we must seek to live A GODLY LIFE. Here we find repentance in Christianity; we find it absent in Hinduism. In Christianity, too, we find it associated with the doctrine of the Incarnation—the keystone of the arch which gives stability to the whole.

As one side of the Incarnation looks towards the atonement of man's sin, the other looks to the renewal of his character in the likeness of God. The former it effects by revealing God's forgiveness; the latter, by revealing God's character and will. The teaching of Christ is the most perfect expression of God's will for man's life that is to be found in human language; it is the most perfect expression of the law written on the hearts of all men. So we find fragments of it in the teaching of other masters. But what gives Christ's teaching its transcendent power is that He was more than His teaching. The word He lived was above the word He taught. In His combined teaching and example He is the perfect rule of life. To obey

Christ and to be like Christ are one and the same thing, and express all that Christianity aims at making its followers. When Jesus Christ on earth called His disciples to follow Him, it was just calling on them to learn to be like Him. And when, after His ascension, He bade His disciples preach repentance, it was practically the same thing; it was calling men to turn from sins to a life of holy obedience, with the assurance that in doing so they need not let anxiety for consequences of former sins hinder them, as these were met by the remission of sins. This life it is beyond man's power to attain. But with the call Christ has given the power to obey it. He has promised the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The Christian life is thus not a life regulated by a series of rules, but a life inspired by a principle, and sustained by a power, which teaches and enables him who seeks to lead it to be in all things like Jesus Christ.

We find a counterpart to all this in Hinduism; but it is the arch without the keystone, and consequently in fragments and ruins. God-like life could scarcely start from the examples of its incarnations, for none of their lives is superhuman in holiness. Even Rama, the most blameless character in Hindu literature, is by no means perfect; while the most popularly worshipped incarnation, as we have seen, committed deeds so vile that even the narrator warns his hearers *not* to take him for their example.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 119. The sage follows up the pantheistic vindication there given with the advice: 'Listen to the story of Hari, but do not think of doing his deeds.'

The idea of striving to attain likeness with the Deity has, accordingly, no place among those sects of Hindus who believe in incarnations of the Deity. The Saivas, who deny the incarnations, are the sectaries who seek to work out a likeness to God and a union with Him by their own lives. This is their whole religion. But, without the Divine example of One who has come from above, they seek to attain divinity by destroying instead of perfecting humanity, by mortifying all human desires and inclinations as well as all sinful desires and inclinations. They cannot conceive anything god-like in the faithful discharge of 'the daily round, the common task'; their conception of being god-like is to be quit of these altogether. The result of this process is rather to destroy what remaining goodness there is in man. It is needful to see some of those whom the Hindus look on as their most holy men, approaching in their perfection most nearly to God, in order to realise how loathsome this conception may become.

Failing such an example of holy life, without any moral power in itself, Hinduism has sought to regulate the lives of its votaries by a series of ceremonies and rules, which begin before birth and stretch to after death. A Hindu has argued that Hinduism is superior to Christianity because it thus regulates the whole of life, so that 'a Hindu sleeps and rises, eats, drinks, bathes, dresses, and performs all the actions of life religiously.' He might have added that he steals and gets drunk, commits uncleanness, and even murder, religiously.

But it is when we come to its teaching with regard to MAN that we find Hinduism in most direct antagonism to Christianity. Christianity, teaching the Fatherhood of God, teaches also the Brotherhood of man. Hinduism, starting with absolute unity—the identity of the divine and human spirits, ends with denying the unity of the human race and affirming the binding obligation of caste. It is here that the great strength of Hinduism lies. At this we need not be surprised. Hinduism developed itself in opposition to Buddhism, which, as well as the Christian religion, was a religion of humanity; and it is natural that Hinduism should be strongest on those points in which it had to struggle most decisively against it.

Caste is therefore, in reality, the greatest strength of Hinduism, the most active foe with which Christianity has to contend. Practical social interests here come in to give vitality to religious dogma. The brotherhood of mankind is as hateful a doctrine to the Hindus as was the idea of the brotherhood of the Negro and European race to the planters of America; and as in India it is the distinctive social doctrine of a hostile creed, it makes them look with suspicion and dislike on all its other teaching. Even when they have been induced to study the Christian religion, and have become convinced of its truth and of the divinity of its Founder, they have not been able to accept the idea of all men being brethren, of the sweeper being naturally the same as the Brahman, and able through education and training to rise to the same

social position. If they do overcome their repugnance to this thought, the terrible social persecution which they would have to endure in practically carrying it out, most frequently proves too strong for their convictions, and holds them bound to follow customs which they condemn, to worship gods in whom they disbelieve. If they take the final step of renouncing caste, then caste takes its final step of renouncing them. They are cut off from Hindu society, they are forbidden to live with their families or mingle with their relatives. The funeral rites are sometimes performed for them, and their wives assume widows' weeds. Native Christians are thus nearly as much isolated from the mass of their countrymen as Europeans are, and as little able to influence them, except from the greater sympathy with their ways of thinking which previous acquaintance gives. Christianity, accordingly, cannot come before the Hindus in those aspects which would help most to commend it; it can spread only from individual to individual, without gaining in any of them a centre of power; it draws many out of Hindu society, but cannot be professed by any within it. Thus has caste fortified Hinduism against Christianity with the triple wall of antipathy, terrorism, and isolation, and but for it the converts to Christianity would have been ten times as numerous as they are.

Lastly, we may contrast the teaching of the two with regard to a FUTURE LIFE. Christianity teaches that the future life is a continuation and develop-

ment of the present life, that eternal life is just the life in Christ which the believer now has, perfectly developed by deliverance from all the sin and limitations of the present life. To the dying believer it gives the hope of a blessed resurrection, a spiritual body, a home in heaven prepared for us by Christ Jesus. To the bereaved it gives the hope of a union with those who have gone before, and being in their society for ever with the Lord. Hinduism offers to its votaries nothing better than the prospect of being born in some new birth, in which all the associations of the present life will be utterly forgotten. To the bereaved it offers no hope of ever meeting again with those who have passed, except perhaps unconsciously they may cross one another's path in some of their future births as friends or as foes. I have spoken to a Hindu father bowed in the bitterness of the loss of an only son, and what was all the consolation which his religion gave him? That the soul of his son had passed to animate some other animal, it might be a god or a devil, a man or a beast; but passed away from him for ever, never to be known again.

Such are the main points of affinity and antagonism between Hinduism and Christianity, and the statement of them leaves little doubt as to whether there is a message which Christianity has to teach India. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the forgiveness of sins and the need of a holy life, the service of God through the service of man now, and the hope of eternal



life—are the message which it brings, and which Hinduism denies. A religion can give nothing more than it pretends to give, and all the salvation which Hinduism offers, either for this world or the world to come, is a blank negation of all that man was created for, and all that in his best moments he aspires to.

There are, however, certain facts which seem to militate against this view of the moral character of the two systems, and to show that practically the difference is not so great. These are the degraded character of many in Christian lands, and the excellent character of many of the Hindus. But a close examination of these facts will show that they have not a direct bearing on the question in hand.

It may be granted that there are multitudes in Great Britain just as bad as any in India; but, in comparing the one with the other, it must be remembered that the defect in the former is their irreligion, in the latter it is their religion. With the former the religious faculty is either dormant or deadened, with the latter it is in full exercise. No Englishman, of whatever social status, thinks of justifying vice or crime on the grounds of religion. Those who are guilty of them are either ignorant of religion, or it has lost its power over them, and they know they are acting in opposition to it. But let the religious faculty be awakened and enlightened by Christian teaching, let it assert its power over them, and they will turn from such evil. Now,



a Hindu may commit any crime, believing that in committing it he is not only not offending against religion, but even performing a religious act. It was as a religious act that the Thug murdered his victims, that the father killed his new-born infant daughter, that the son applied the torch to the pile of wood on to which his widowed mother had mounted. Uncleanliness is as much a part of Hindu worship as it was of the heathen worship in Corinth and Ephesus in the days of the Apostle Paul. The lapsed masses in Great Britain are low and degraded because they are not Christians. The masses of India are low and degraded because they are Hindus. The former are held down in spite of, the latter in consequence of, their religion. The same may be said in comparing the lives of many professed Christians with the lives of many professed Hindus. The inconsistencies of the former are the consistencies of the latter. This may be a strong argument for seeking to give Christianity a stronger hold on Great Britain, but it is no argument for withholding it from India.

But, it is further contended, there are good men among the Hindus as well as among Christians, persons who teach a pure morality and who practise it, and we must judge of a religion by the best examples it produces, not by the worst. Again, it must here be decided whether what is good in these examples is the fruit of their religion—whether it is a special result of Hinduism or of naturally good principles, and whether what is good in them can influence their countrymen—whether

Hinduism is a *power* for good. That it includes much that is good, and that it recognises good, I have sought to show. There are some who dwell more especially on this side of it, and those who do so may find in its literature much to encourage them and stimulate them. But that it also recognises the bad, and that those who wish to follow evil may also find in its sacred books much to encourage them, is also true. Hinduism does not discourage good, except in so far as it does not discourage evil; but that is quite sufficient to prevent it being a power for good.

## CHAPTER XII.

### REFORM MOVEMENTS IN HINDUISM.

**H**INDUISM as it is cannot be a moral power. But may not its defects be remedied? may not the evil be eliminated and the good remain? Are not English education, European civilisation, and contact with Christianity so influencing it that it will ultimately change and become a power for good? This question demands consideration, for it is the point to which the question has practically come. These influences have already produced marked changes in Hindu society, and no one can compare the India of to-day with the India of even twenty years ago without feeling that the old order is passing away. The movement is as yet only superficial. It has reached little further than those centres and those classes that are affected by English education. The great mass of the people, the agricultural population, and the labouring population, are not yet stirred by the breath that is blowing on the surface. There is still enough inert Hinduism in at least nine-tenths of the Hindu community to dominate all the rest, if the disturbing influences were withdrawn. If by any political cataclysm the English rule were overthrown, and

the rule of no other Christian power substituted ; if Indian society were left to settle itself on its own basis, there can be little doubt that, after a period of ferment, things would settle down very much as they were before the English Government began its innovations. The Brahmans would rule the other castes with a sway more despotic than ever ; widows would soon be burning themselves on the pyre along with the bodies of their dead husbands ; parents would have no scruple in destroying their female children ; self-immolation before the cars of the idols and self-torture at religious festivals would again be common scenes in India. The attitude of the native community on the Age of Consent Bill shows that the spirit of Hinduism is still unbroken in the hearts of even educated Hindus, and is ready to assert itself if the controlling power should be removed. Even the Christian community that has been established has not yet cohesion or aggressiveness enough to affect the general population much more than the Malabar Christians have done through the past centuries.

But there is little likelihood of the English rule being overthrown, or any of those influences being withdrawn that are steadily telling on Hinduism. We see the process going on in India that went on in Europe in the early ages of Christianity, when the power of the old faiths was overthrown first of all in the cities, and their votaries were to be found only in the country, whence they were called pagans or heathen, villagers or country-men. There is comparatively little change in village life in India, but

in the cities there is a very obvious mental and religious ferment going on. The influence of Government education, based as it is, and must be, on religious neutrality, has been negative rather than positive. It has had the effect of destroying faith in Hinduism in all who have passed through its course, but it has substituted nothing in its stead. Hindu rites are still performed by those whom it has trained, not from any faith in them, but only as observances required by society. The educated youth, if not atheists at heart, are mostly living without any religious sanctions for the morality they are taught. Government seems to be shrinking from its own handiwork. It is introducing a more religious tone into the books used in its schools, as far as the principles of religious neutrality will allow ; and is seeking, where possible, to withdraw in favour of mission schools. The education in these latter is, of course, distinctly positive ; but though it has had the effect of making Christian truth known to all who have received it, it has not as yet led many to break with their old religion. It has rather had the effect of convincing them that the principles of Christianity are true, and of making them try to find these principles within their own faith.

There is thus a great deal of unrest among the educated classes in India. They are utterly dissatisfied with Hinduism as it is. They are repelled by the foreign aspect which Christianity at first presents, and do not wish to break altogether with the religion of their fathers. Many, too, profess

not to find Christianity intellectually adequate, and to be unable to accept it fully; and so they are seeking for something that may satisfy them better. This has led to two principal movements among the educated Hindus—the BRĀHMA SAMĀJ<sup>1</sup> and the ĀRYA SAMĀJ. The former is the result of the impact of European culture and Christian thought on Hinduism; the latter is the result of a strong theistic movement from the midst of Hinduism itself. The former is already very much a thing of the past; the latter is in the full vigour of its first impulse.

### *The Brāhma Samāj.*

The Brahma Samaj is, or was, well known in England. Its leaders were able men—men of European culture, with strong sympathy with certain forms of Christian truth. They therefore enlisted the sympathy of all in this country who were interested in India, and gave the movement with which they were associated an importance out of proportion to any hold which it ever took on Hindu society.

It owes its origin to the well-known RĀM MOHUN ROY, who began teaching and writing about the beginning of this century. By his publication of the *Precepts of Jesus*, he showed at least one source whence he derived his inspiration; but he selected also from what is good in the Hindu

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<sup>1</sup> Samāj means a society or church. Like the word church, it may mean either the society that meets in one town or building or the larger society composed of the other societies collectively.

Scriptures, especially the Vedas. The ground he took was that of opposition, not to Brahmanism, but to the perversions of it that had become common in India; and he claimed to be leading his countrymen back to their primitive faith. He came to England on a visit towards the close of 1830, and died at Bristol in the year 1833.

The Brahma Samaj was founded in 1830 by him and others who had imbibed his opinions, as an attempt to supply theistic worship without being dependent on foreign teaching or influence. About ten years later, Babu DEBENDRA NATH TAGORE became one of its leaders; and under him it made considerable progress towards separation from orthodox Hinduism, but he could not break off from it altogether. This step was taken by Babu KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, who joined the Samaj in 1858, when only twenty years of age, and soon became a leader. He was much more progressive than his colleagues, and in 1865 brought matters to a crisis by demanding, among other things, that the external signs of caste distinction should no longer be used. When this was refused by the majority, he and some of the younger Brahmists left, and in 1866 organised the Brahma Samaj of India, called also the PROGRESSIVE SAMAJ, while the others remained as the *ĀDI*, or original SAMAJ.

We may first look at the course of the latter, who tried to reform Hinduism by remaining within its pale! Their avowed object was to make the

new religion a fulfilment of the old, instead of an abrogation of it; and they recognised no texts but those of the Hindu Shastras. They, in fact, attempted to found a system of Deism on a system of pantheistic idolatry—a task more hopeless than to exterminate the latter. They taught one personal god, but denominated him by the formula of Vedantic pantheism—one only without a second. They denounced idolatry, but allowed it in certain circumstances. The natural result followed: the system, exposed to the assaults of Progressive Brahminism and of Christianity, was obliged to fall back on its original source, and soon came to be scarcely distinguishable from orthodox Hinduism. One of its leaders, Narayan Bose, defended Hinduism as superior to Christianity and other religions, not although it maintained, but because it maintained, inferior stages of religious belief in its own bosom—these inferior stages including the worship of Krishna and of the linga, the sensuality of the Maharajas and the self-torture of the Jogis. When challenged for admitting the Tantras as sacred books, he defended himself on the ground that, though they contained many indecent passages, yet they contained some of the sublimest precepts of morality and religion; though some enjoined excessive drinking and unlawful intercourse, others deprecated them in the strongest terms. Thus they fell back into the old slough of Hinduism, utterly impotent for good. The Tantras were sacred books, because they contained some sublime precepts, and these the Adi Brahmists sought to



follow ; but they also enjoined excessive drinking and unlawful intercourse, and these the Saktas carried into practice. Both were founded on the Shastras, both were included within the pale of Hinduism, and this showed its superiority to Christianity ! It is not surprising that the original leader of the Adi Samaj, the earnest Debendra Nath Tagore, should have sought refuge from this position in asceticism. Adi Brahminism has accomplished its design of fulfilling the old religion, but it has proved that no fulfilment of the old religion can be a reformation.

Chunder Sen and the Progressive Brahmists broke entirely with Hinduism. He summed up his creed in the words, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. He looked for its enforcement to the revelation contained in the volume of Nature and the volume of the human mind, and he selected from the scriptures of all creeds what seemed best in them for instruction and for worship. His high character, the strong moral tone of his teaching, and his zealous labours for the diffusion of knowledge, pointed him out as one of the likeliest of Indian reformers. His tributes to Christ are among the most earnest and eloquent that have been paid to Him, and scarcely less striking is his acknowledgment of the debt which India owes to Christian missionaries. His religious position had much affinity with that of Martineau and the most spiritual Unitarians in this country. He was looked to by them as the coming man, who was to

win India to a true spiritual religion; and his eloquence and high moral purpose won recognition from all classes in this country, and secured for the Brahma Samaj an interest that has not been felt in any other reform movement in India.

The causes of its failure I will look at presently, but will first follow the external history of the movement. A division took place in the Progressive Brahmists in 1878. The occasion of this was the marriage of Chunder Sen's daughter with the Rajah of Cutch Behar. One of the greatest curses of Hindu society, one of those most strenuously denounced by the Brahma Samaj, is the custom of infant marriages; and they have fixed fourteen, and got it recognised by law, as the lowest age at which a Brahma girl may be married. Chunder Sen's daughter was not yet that age when her marriage took place. It was pleaded in justification that the marriage was little more than a formal betrothal, the actual marriage not taking place for two years after, and that the Brahma leader did not break the spirit, if he did break the letter of the rules he had laid down. There would probably have been no schism had there not been other causes at work. But Chunder Sen had come to be so despotic in his management of the Samaj that many of its members resented his conduct, and he met their remonstrances on his daughter's marriage in the same spirit. Instead of reasoning or yielding, he pleaded what could only be a divine revelation. Had this been directing him to perform an act of self-denial, it might have been

accepted ; but seeing that, like those of Mohammed, it was directing him to do what he had forbidden to others, and what was for his own advantage, it is not surprising that it should have provoked the resentment of many of his followers. They withdrew, and formed in May 1878 a separate society, under the name of the General (SĀDHĀRANA) Brahma Samaj. They have a separate place of worship, and aim at being more democratic ; but their spirit, teaching, and form of worship are the same. Chunder Sen after the schism tried to galvanise his section into new life by a fresh infusion of Christian ideas and phrases. He spoke of his movement as the New Dispensation, the fulfilment of the old ; spoke of the influence of the Holy Spirit ; instituted a sacrament of rice and water, reading some scripture, such as Luke xxii. He died in 1885, but the schism has not been healed.

There are thus three sections of the Brahma Samaj. This would not hinder, but rather foster its development, if it had an adequate religious basis on which to work. But this it has not. It is in its ultimate principles bare Deism—much the same as the Deism of last century. ‘There is something in Pantheism so deep that naught in bare Deism can meet it. Deism is not so deep. And Pantheism may well keep the house till a stronger than Deism comes to take possession of it. In Jesus Christ I find the only true solution of the mystery.’ These words of one of our deepest

thinkers<sup>1</sup> have found practical illustration in the history of the Brahma Samaj. It won many converts from the educated classes, but it failed to retain them.

There is another defect closely connected with the above. It is an eclectic religion: it seeks to select what is good from all religions, and it has become the latest evidence that no eclectic religion can ever influence large numbers of men. Such systems must always fail in the authority, and also in the logic of religion, which are needful to secure such an end. In the Brahma Samaj the ultimate authority is each man's own experience and conviction. Their system, such as it is, is contradictory. Its basis is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. These are Christian dogmas, and Christianity logically carries out the dogma of the Fatherhood of God in that of the forgiveness of sins. This Brahminism denies, teaching that 'every sinner must suffer the consequences of his own sins sooner or later, in this world or the next.' Thus it teaches that God is a Father, but denies Him the fatherly power of forgiving His children. The Brahminists seem to expect that they will find strength in the newly-developed science of religion, according to whose light they fancy they are formulating their religion.<sup>2</sup> But religion is not the

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan, *Horæ Peripateticæ*.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Mr. Hector, Principal of the Duff College, Calcutta, has kindly supplied me with the following extracts from publications of the Brahma Samaj, chiefly of the New Dispensation, which show its eclectic character:—'All philosophy and theology, Hindu, Buddhistic, Socratic, Judaic, Mohammedan, Sikh, Parsi, are

product of science, and any attempt to construct it by science must be a failure.

The total number of Brahmas, according to the recent census, in all India, was 3401. Their influence does not seem to extend beyond certain circles in Calcutta. In my recent visit to the North-West of India, I found no trace of Brahmas where they used to make themselves well heard of. I could not help feeling that in considering the religious position in India the Brahma Samaj might be treated as a negligible quantity.<sup>1</sup> But the movement which gave it importance is finding expression in

### *The Arya Samaj.*

This movement originated with DAYĀNAND SARA-SWATI, a Guzerati Brahman, born about the year 1825. This was not his first name. He never in after life told what that was, or who were his

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fragments of the Eternal Word. The Christ who brings again together the separate fragments, and makes them one, is indeed the living Christ of the New Dispensation.' 'The New Dispensation is Christian to the Christians, and Hindu to the Hindus.' It is 'historically the result of England's rule in the East, religiously the effect of Western thought on the Indian mind.' An article on the 'Harmony of the Scriptures,' in the figure of a dance, mixes up Jesus, Moses, David, Nanak, John, Paul, Mohammed. 'The Bible and the Vedas dance together with the Bhagavat; the Purana and the Koran dance, joined in love.' 'Our first war was with grim idolatry; our victory we proclaimed by trumpeting forth the praise of the Ekamevadwitiyam. The New Dispensation worships the Father, honours the Son, and lives on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>1</sup> The Prarthna Samaj, a movement in Bombay corresponding with the Brahma Samaj in Calcutta, is not showing any greater expansive power.

parents, as that might have necessitated his going back to them and his giving up the work to which he had devoted his life. He was early taught Sanskrit, and, when fourteen years of age, had learned the Sanhita of the Yajur Veda by heart.

At the age of fourteen, doubts first entered his mind. His father was a Saiva, and he was initiated by him into the worship of Siva. As part of that initiation he had to keep fast and vigil for a whole night in one of the temples of that god. By the third watch his father and attendants had fallen asleep, and he, thus left alone, began to meditate. He asked himself whether the hideous idol which he saw before him, which allowed mice to run over his body, could be the Infinite Deity. He roused his father and asked him to solve his difficulty, and received the ordinary vindication of idol worship, but without being satisfied. His faith in the idol was gone; he felt no interest in continuing his vigil, but took some food he had brought with him, and fell asleep. On returning home, all he could do was to conceal from his parents his lack of faith, and devote his time to study.

Some time after this, the death first of a beloved sister and then of a revered uncle, awoke in his mind the old problem that Buddha had tried to solve—how to alleviate human misery and to attain final liberation. He resolved to attempt the solution, but kept his purpose to himself. When he was twenty-one years of age, he found that his parents were making preparations for his marriage. This would have been fatal to the plan of life he

had resolved on, so he left his father's home; and though he was traced, and attempts were made to bring him back,—on one occasion with nearly successful results,—yet he eluded them all. The various guilds of religious recluses and colleges of pundits in India afford a refuge for such a spirit. Through them he became acquainted with the schools of Vedic philosophy. From one of the teachers he met with, Brahmananda, 'I learned clearly,' he says, 'that I am God, the soul and God being one.'<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, he was admitted to the order of Sanyasis or Dandis,<sup>2</sup> and took the name of Dayanand Saraswati. The only account of his life<sup>3</sup> which I have been able to see, gives his autobiography up to the year 1856, when he was thirty-one years of age. It contains vivid accounts of his wanderings to trace the great rivers of India to their source, but does not say much as to the growth of his beliefs, and his biographer says nothing whatever on the subject.

I saw him when he visited Ajmer in the beginning of 1866.<sup>4</sup> He was a tall, well-made, fine-

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<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 83. The word *Brāhm* may perhaps be translated Divine Essence rather than God.

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *A Triumph of Truth*, by Durga Parsad, Lahore.

<sup>4</sup> I wrote an account of some interviews we had with this reformer, which appeared in the *United Presbyterian Record*, September 1866. The following extracts may be interesting, as showing the change between his position then and when his system took its final form: 'The discussion finally came to the capital question as to the identity of the divine and human spirits, which he maintained, and we, of course, denied. . . . His argument was based chiefly on the omnipresence of the Divine Spirit. This I answered by an analysis of the Sanskrit word,



looking man, with no covering but a saffron cloth tied about his loins and another thrown loosely over his body. He impressed me as a man of keen intellect and commanding personality; and I could quite understand the fascination he exercised over his followers. At that time he had not broken with orthodox Hinduism, nor did he seem to doubt his pantheistic creed, though theistic instincts seemed to trouble him and embarrass him in discussion. He declared that he was in search of truth, and would follow it wherever he found it; but he pointed out to me that the word he used was *sat*,

which means "all-pervading," arguing that if he *pervaded* all, he could not *be* the all. He could not answer this at all clearly, but tried to support his position by the analogy of the air, etc." Compare this with his final summary of doctrine: '5. God and soul are both incorporeal and unchangeable, and are related to each other as Pervader and pervaded' (*Beliefs of Dayanand Saraswati*. Lahore, 1887). Again: 'Though he had affirmed very confidently that there were no errors in the Rig Veda, I felt pretty sure that he had never read it; and, to test him, I made the pundit copy out some objectionable passages without the commentary. The language of the Rig Veda is very old Sanskrit, and without this aid no pundit can make it out for the first time. . . . I handed to him before all the people the list of texts I had chosen. He took them, read them over, tried to make them out, and at last confessed that he could not, saying that I should have brought the commentary also. I replied that as he had so strenuously denied all errors in the Rig Veda, I had taken for granted that he had read it, and would recognise the passages I had quoted. He very candidly acknowledged that he had not read the Rig Veda, and that he had no right to speak so confidently of a book which he had not read' (*United Presbyterian Record*, 1866). Compare this with his seventh condition of a divine revelation: 'It must be inspired in the language which is not spoken in any country on the surface of the earth.' When, in my recent visit to India, I asked any of the Aryas for the justification of such a condition, they always referred to the fact that the language of the Veda was different from ordinary Sanskrit.



not *sach*. The former may be translated reality, the latter, veracity. To the latter he did not seem to attach much importance, for the former he seemed to be always searching. He still believed in caste as laid down in the laws of Manu, and when confronted with some of these laws he maintained they were divine, but with the impatience of a man who felt himself in a false position. In the same way he acknowledged some of the legends in the Saiva Puranas to be immoral, and when pressed changed the subject as quickly as possible. He was an uncompromising iconoclast, and was quite willing to unite with the Christians to move Government to destroy all the idols in India. He had an unwavering faith in the Vedas, though he knew only the Yajur Veda, and believed he would find in them the authority for those principles which he seemed instinctively to have grasped. He said: 'I do not believe that there is a single error in any of the Vedas, and if you show me one I will maintain that it is the interpolation of a clever scoundrel.' As a consistent pantheist, he denied that he ever committed sin, and was greatly astonished that I should allow I had done so.

Two circumstances helped forward his religious and philosophical development at this time—he first became acquainted with the Christian Scriptures, and he first became acquainted with the original Hindu Scriptures. The first copy of the Rig Veda which he saw was one in my possession, that edited by Max Müller. Both of these he procured for himself, getting the Bible in Hindi.

Coming to the study of the latter with the bent his mind had received, it is not surprising that he rejected it. He assailed it both by word and pen in a truculent, unscrupulous manner. His attacks on the character of Jesus show a moral inability to understand Him; and indeed, between the proud, self-sufficient, supercilious Brahman and the lowly Jesus of Nazareth there is about as vast a contrast as could be.<sup>1</sup> He constantly expresses the wish that Christians would turn to the Vedas and learn to know the god of the Vedas, and they would at once see his vast superiority. Yet it is evident

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in reference to Christ calling the sons of Zebedee to follow Him, he says: 'Jesus failed Himself to render to His parents the service required in the Ten Commandments, and He called away others from waiting on their parents, and it was because of this offence that He was so short-lived,'—this from one who had run off from his parents! Regarding the promise that every one that hath left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for Christ's sake shall receive a hundredfold, he tells us that no one can ever have a hundred fathers or mothers, but each individual has just one father and one mother. On the text, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' he says, 'If heaven is one, there ought to be in it only one king, but if all the poor or humble go there, to whom will the kingdom belong?' Jesus, he says, was a plain, honest man, though ignorant and without supernatural powers. Some good things came from His mouth, and a great many evil. He was a carpenter, who lived in a jungly country, and when He began to teach as a prophet He was accepted. If Europe had been enlightened then as it is now, He would have had no success. He applies the proverb, 'In a treeless country even the castor-oil plant is a tree,' to Jesus as a religious teacher. He applies it also to Max Müller as a Sanskrit scholar. He does not seem to suspect that it may apply to himself as both. He is very indignant with the Brahma Samaj and the Prarthna Samaj for the respect with which they speak of Christ and of European learning. See 'Dayanand Saraswati's Strictures on the Bible,' by Rev. J. Gray, Ajmer. *Indian Evangelical Review*, October 1886.

that, in the conception which he ultimately formed and expressed of God, he was influenced much more by the Bible than by the Veda.

His treatment of the Veda, though, of course, quite different, is no less characteristic. He assumes it to be the source of all truth; but, instead of examining it to learn what truth it teaches, he reads into it his own beliefs, and claims power to determine what in it is inspired and what is not. He even finds in it, as the source of all science, the elements of railway engineering and electric science. His interpretations are generally thoroughly rationalistic. Thus he explains the *devas* (gods) to be the learned, and the *asuras* (devils) to be the unlearned. The worship of God 'consists in the respect and service of learned and virtuous men, parents, sages, philosophers, preachers, and kings; in fidelity to the marriage contract, and in the devotion of women to their husbands.' 'The *Yajna* (sacrifice, or sacrificial cult) is the entertainment of the learned in proportion to their worth, the business of manufacture, the experiment and application of chemistry, physics, and the like arts of peace, the instruction of people, the purification of the air, the nourishment of vegetables by the employment of the principles of meteorology, called *Agni-hotra* in Sanskrit, which showers blessings on all around. It is the most important duty of man.'<sup>1</sup> A wide enough definition of sacrifice, certainly!

In the final summary of his beliefs he maintained

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<sup>1</sup> *Beliefs of Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Lahore*, p. 10.

the eternally distinct existence of the Supreme Spirit, of human souls, and of matter, taking thus the same position as Ramannja, the Vaishnava reformer of the twelfth century. He maintained the doctrine of metempsychosis, with its consequent denial of the forgiveness of sins, and he attacked very vehemently the doctrine of forgiveness in the Bible. He denied caste as having no warrant from the Vedas,<sup>1</sup> but he tried to retain the four castes as orders of learning, and wished the caste of each individual to be determined by something like competitive examination.

He tried to get Brahmans and pundits to adopt his views; but, failing in this, he turned to the common people, and at Bombay, in 1875, founded the Arya Samaj. He adopted the word Arya, rather than Hindu, considering the former to be the original designation of the people, and the latter a term of reproach given them by their enemies. Arya Vartta (Aryaland) he considered the land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains, where he said the Aryas had dwelt since the foundation of the world; but he did not limit the Samaj to that district. He moved about, establishing Samajes in various places, attracting numbers of the younger Hindus especially, by his

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<sup>1</sup> The Arya Catechism says: 'There is no distinction between men when they are born. The qualifications they acquire, and the actions they do, are tests for their classification as Brahmans, Kshatrya, Vaishya, and Shudra. If a man born of Brahman parents is illiterate and does unrighteous acts, he is a Shudra. If one born of Shudra parents is well-versed in all the sciences and does good and meritorious actions, he is a Brahman.' See also Appendix F.

eloquence and enthusiasm, and disputing both with missionaries and with pundits. He died in 1883 at Ajmer. His last written words are: 'I accept such universal maxims as the speaking of truth and the condemnation of falsehood. But I detest the religious warfare of sects; . . . the purpose of my life is the extirpation of evils; the introduction of truth in thought, speech, and deeds; the preservation of unity in religion; the expulsion of mutual enmity; the extension of friendly intercourse; and the advancement of public happiness by reciprocal subservience of the human family. May the grace of the Almighty God, and the consent and co-operation of the learned, soon spread these doctrines all over the world, to facilitate every one's endeavour in the advancement of virtue, wealth, godly pleasures, and salvation, so that peace, prosperity, and happiness may ever reign in the world. Amen.'

Such was the founder of the Arya Samaj, and his influence is still felt powerfully in its organisation and working. It is organised somewhat on the model of a European guild, the different Samajes uniting in one great Samaj. All may become members of it who are over the age of eighteen, and who accept its principles. Members are required to subscribe not less than one per cent. of their income to its funds, and those whose monthly contributions amount to more than ten rupees, or who show special interest, are considered active members. The Samaj undertakes to supply

a great variety of wants in the life of its members. It regulates their creed, and makes provision for religious worship ; it supplies facilities for mutual improvement, and is also a mutual benefit society ; it unites them for active propagandism and influencing the general mass of Hinduism. Its strength and its weakness may best be judged by its own standards. The following are the

#### TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ.

I. God is the primary source of all true knowledge, and of the things made known by it.

II. God is all truth, all knowledge, all beatitude, boundless, almighty, just, merciful, unbegotten, without a beginning, incomparable, the support and Lord of all, all-pervading, omniscient, imperishable, immortal, eternal, holy, and the cause of the universe : worship is due to Him alone.

III. The Vedas are the books of true knowledge, and it is the paramount duty of the Aryas to read, hear, teach, and preach them.

IV. We should always be ready to accept truth, and renounce untruth when discovered.

V. Truth arrived at after consummate deliberation should be our guiding principle in all our actions.

VI. The primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition of mankind.

VII. Love, justice, and prosperity should guide us in our dealings with others.

VIII. We ought to try to dispel the darkness of ignorance, and to spread the light of knowledge.

IX. No one should rest satisfied with his own individual good, but ought to seek his own good in the good of others.

X. In all that concerns the interests of the public weal, persons should frankly subject themselves to the good of others ; but all should retain independence in what concerns their personal interests.

These rules, though rather vague and flabby as compared with the laws of Buddha and other old codes of India, yet present a high ideal. The most important practically is the sixth, and it includes an extensive programme both of living and of a drastic reform of abuses in Hindu society. Under it the Aryas include the performance of the Agni-hotra, abstinence from animal food and all spirituous liquors, strict attention to cleanliness and to exercise, the abolition of caste and of idolatry, of early marriages and of excessive expenditure on marriages, the promotion of female education and the remarriage of widows, appointment of Vedic missionaries and establishment of orphanages and dispensaries. The two last items have, no doubt, a benevolent aim, but they are also avowedly established as a means of counteracting missionary institutions of a similar kind.

Of the other principles above stated, the only one about which there will be any question is the third, which practically claims the Vedas as the only true revelation. The evidence on which they rest this is, that they alone satisfy the following conditions, which, according to the Aryas, are essential in a true revelation:—

1. It should not conflict with natural laws.
2. It should comprise precepts which are conformable to the laws of Nature and the divine attributes.
3. It should contain the germ of all true science.
4. It should be communicated as soon as the world comes into existence.
5. The divine commandments it contains must not be contradictory to one another, but must be immutable and eternal.



6. It should not instruct us to believe in a mediator, saviour, or prophet, who pretends to secure us heaven or hell.

7. It must be inspired in the language which is not spoken in any country on the surface of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

8. It should embrace no historical and biographical events.

9. It should be compatible with true science, and its principles should stand to reason.

10. It should not sanction the killing of animated beings.

It is evident that the Arya Samaj is a movement entirely different in kind from the Brahma Samaj. The latter is an attempt to seek out affinities between Hinduism and other religions, to reach the religious basis that underlies all, and present it in a form as suited to India as possible. The Arya Samaj, on the other hand, is the outcome of a strong theistic instinct, and of a clear observation of the reforms needed in Hindu society, on a mind ignorant of all culture but that of Hinduism, and intensely resolved to find in Indian religion itself the warrant for all his convictions. But it is just this intensity of conviction, affirming contradictions and assimilating obstacles, which gives the Arya Samaj its power. There was something rousing in the appeal of its founder to the youth of India to adopt a system of caste in which the highest rank was open to the most humbly born. I have conversed with an educated Arya, a Brahman by birth, who gloried in the fact that in the Samaj the lowest Sudra could take his place alongside of him, if he qualified himself by learning and by conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 218.



But it is only when we estimate the state of affairs that has been produced by English education that we can understand the hold which the Arya Samaj has taken. The faith of educated natives in the religion of their fathers, as it had been taught them, was utterly undermined. They felt that the modern constitution of Hindu society was utterly indefensible, and that reform was imperative. Christianity seemed a foreign, and therefore a hostile faith. The Brahma Samaj seemed also something of a foreign movement, without any sanctions to which they could appeal. But the Arya Samaj was a movement from the very centre of Hinduism itself, a response to all their desires. It presented a view of the original faith of India, that seemed to them to harmonise with all the discoveries of modern science and the ethics of European civilisation. They rallied to its standard with all the ardour of patriotism. Thus it has come to pass that a teacher, who was utterly unacquainted with the English language, and an entire stranger to Western culture, has found his most devoted and enthusiastic followers among those who have been trained in both of these. They are generally as ignorant of Sanskrit as he was of English, and so accept without questioning his interpretation of the Vedas. They have brought to his support all the weapons furnished by the agnostic and infidel literature of Europe. They are the most confident and persistent opponents of Christianity, though their claim that, since the establishment of the Samaj, conversions to Christ-

ianity have ceased, is distinctly contradicted by fact. They are ready to carry out their convictions in practice,<sup>1</sup> are seeking to put down idol worship, to promote female as well as other education, to abolish infant marriage and allow widow remarriage, and in general, to carry out needed reforms. They subscribe liberally to the funds of the Samaj, and for meeting Christianity in the sphere of philanthropy. The progress they have made is also considerable. Last census showed that they numbered 40,000; and though this is less than had been estimated alike by friends and foes, yet it must be noticed that in fifteen years the Arya Samaj has secured ten times as many followers as the Brahma Samaj has in sixty years.

It is still too near the time of Dayanand Saraswati's death to say what the final issue of the movement will be. The memory of his personal influence still holds his followers together, but already divergences are beginning to appear. He has bequeathed to his followers a legacy of contradiction between his own teaching and his pretended authorities, and between these latter and European science, which must constantly embarrass them.<sup>2</sup> The Arya Apologetic is always based on

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<sup>1</sup> The ruler of a small subordinate state in Rajputana became an Arya. He at once disestablished and disendowed Hinduism, by confiscating all the religious endowments of the temples. Such a proceeding was possible only in a native state, and, though we may not approve of the want of consideration shown, it suggests the question whether the presence of the English Government may not ultimately come to be the great bulwark of Hinduism.

<sup>2</sup> An instance of this will be found in the note, pp. 18, 19.

rational or scientific grounds;<sup>1</sup> the Vedas are brought in only to give religious sanction, and their texts explained, or explained away, to suit the position. The marks of a divine revelation which I have quoted can hardly be read without a smile, and it would not be difficult to show that the Vedas tested even by them are not divine. The same failure to grasp true scientific arguments<sup>2</sup> is seen in other ways in their writings, and show that the Samaj can have vitality only in the twilight of scientific thought. In denying repentance and forgiveness of sins it denies a want of human nature which must ultimately make it yield to Christianity; in denying a mediator it denies a religious instinct which would ultimately give even old Hinduism the victory. Meanwhile, though it is one of the most redoubtable antagonists with which Christianity has to reckon, it is one of the most powerful disintegrators of old Hinduism, and may thus do a work in clearing the way for Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Arya Catechism the use of animal food is condemned, because monkeys, though they have canine teeth, are vegetarian; because milk is a food that may be obtained from animals without hurting them; because a cow if killed will feed only eighty men for one day, while if spared its milk will feed three men for nine months; because it deals a blow at the prosperity of a nation, is cruel to animals, is productive of disease, and pernicious to morals. The texts of the Vedas that seem to sanction it are ignored. Idol worship is pronounced a sin because it blunts the mind, hinders spiritual progress, and brings the Hindus into contempt.

<sup>2</sup> They glory in the antiquity of the Vedic religion, which they say dates from the foundation of the world. A tract I have quoted, *Beliefs of Dayanand Saraswati*, bears the date, 1,960,852,987 A.M.; and beneath, to show the modernness of Christianity, 1887 A.D.

The question naturally arises, How far has this and the movements that have preceded it loosened the hold of Hinduism on the mass of the people? In the beginning of this chapter I have intimated my belief that the movement has not yet, with the great mass of the people, gone much below the surface. But it is beginning to affect the centres of thought. Hinduism still shows a great deal of vitality and activity, but this, too, is also superficial. Nothing strikes one, going back after twenty years to India, more than the immense number of fine temples that are being built everywhere, especially in sacred places. This, however, is more an evidence of the security of the British rule, and of the wealth that is being accumulated by natives under it, than of anything else. The number of pilgrims that go to sacred places is diminishing, even while the population is increasing, and the railway is giving additional facilities for reaching them.

Caste is also being very much modified, if it is not breaking up. The rules of intercourse between the various castes are much less stringent, and the penalties for eating and drinking with those of other castes less rigorously enforced than they used to be. All this, however, does not affect the root-idea of caste. It is on the point of intermarriage that the last battle of caste will be fought out, and this has not yet been approached. I could not see that it had lost any of its power as a hindrance to the progress of Christianity. And while it is losing power in some of the higher castes, it is increasing

its power in some of the lower castes, and is bringing many of the out-castes, aboriginal tribes and others, within the pale of Hinduism. I have already referred to the manner in which the propaganda is carried on. By means of it some tribes which, twenty years ago, were outside the pale of Hinduism are now brought inside of it, and are much more zealous for their caste rules than are some of the higher castes. Caste is like a tree rotten at the core, but flourishing in its branches.

It is also to be noticed that some castes, as castes, are moving in the direction of reform. Thus the Rajputs came to an agreement that they would raise the age at which their daughters were to be considered marriageable, and limited very strictly, in proportion to the income of the father, the sum of money to be spent at marriages. Other castes are following suit.

I noticed also that several of the castes had formed Samajes of their own, as though they were wishing to utilise the idea of the Samaj for strengthening caste. The rise of Samajes seems a result of the contact of Hinduism with Christianity, as the rise of the Panths was of its contact with Mohammedanism. There is what we may call a Samaj movement going on in India. Caste is seeking to assimilate it, and derive new vitality from it. We have object lessons now of what may have occurred in the contest with Buddhism; and a few more decades may see Hinduism entrenched still in its old lines of caste, but modified to suit

many requirements of modern civilisation, and claiming that so it has always been.

One important movement that has lately taken place is the rise of the Indian Congress. This is a political rather than a religious movement, and so I do not wish to say much on it. But in India the political future is so closely bound up with the religious future, that the two can hardly be separated. In India, society rests on a religious basis, and until Hindu society is reformed, Hindu political emancipation is a vain dream. The Congress has had the effect of drawing away the attention of many zealous social and religious reformers from the social question to the political question, and so retarding instead of helping forward social reform. The influence of the Congress has been entirely passive on social questions; and where Government has attempted to reform by legislation some of the worst abuses, it has received no countenance from the Congress. Representative Government in a caste-divided community is an anomaly. If Indian reformers wish to secure the political emancipation of their country on a true basis, they will devote themselves to securing the essential condition for this in social reform and the abolition of caste distinctions.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANITY.

SUCH, then, is the present position of the religious conflict in India. Christianity is pressing forward its claims to world-wide conquest; Hinduism is fully awakening to the struggle, and is meeting Christianity—among the educated by means of the various Samajes, among the lower classes and aborigines by developing the caste system. What are the prospects of the struggle, and what attitude must Christianity preserve to secure success? Here we may ask first: What have been the results in the past—what success has attended Christian missions up to the present time?

We hear a great deal from some quarters of the failure of missions in India. Some who speak thus are hostile to missions, others are friendly; both ignore the lessons of the past history of Christianity, and seem to assume that, unless it makes the same progress in a decade now which it did in a century in the early ages, it is a failure. To judge whether an enterprise is a failure we must look at the anticipations which have been entertained. Twenty years ago the most sanguine advocates of missions did not anticipate the con-



version of India to Christianity in less than two centuries. When these have passed, the world will be better able to estimate the final result. Meanwhile we can only judge whether the anticipations for the last twenty years have been realised.

Looking at the total Christian community of India, we find that during these years it has increased from about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  millions—an increase of 50 per cent. Twenty years ago the number of Christians in India proper was about equal to that of the Jains, and about 20 per cent. under that of the Sikhs. Ten years ago their number was about that of the Sikhs; now they are nearly 20 per cent. ahead of them. Excluding Burmah with its 7 millions of Buddhists, and looking merely at India proper, whose religions alone we have been considering, we find that the Christians are more numerous than the followers of any of the smaller religious sects, and occupy the third place. There is no doubt a vast distance between the 207 millions of Hindus and 57 millions Mohammedans on the one hand, and the  $2\frac{1}{4}$  millions of Christians on the other. But, vast as it is, it must be measured with purpose to overtake it, and with confidence that it can be done. If, forty years ago, the prophecy had been made that before the end of the century the Christians would outnumber the Sikhs, how many would have laughed it to scorn! Yet that result has been attained, and should encourage the Christian Church to press on to the larger conquest.

We look, however, with special interest to the progress that has been made by the Protestant Church, which has not yet succumbed, and let us trust never will succumb, to the paralysing influence of Hinduism. Though Protestant missions began early last century, it was not till the middle of this century that the missionary community, led by the late Dr. Mullens of Calcutta, sought carefully to ascertain its position and the progress it was making. The census of 1851 showed, as the fruit of upwards of a century of missionary labour, a Christian community of 91,092, with a Church membership of 14,661, about 16 per cent. of the whole. In 1871 the numbers of the Christian community had risen to 224,258, an increase of 146 per cent.; and in 1890 they had risen to about 560,000, an increase of 150 per cent. Those in Church membership had, during the same period, increased to 52,816 in 1871, and 182,722 in 1890. Taking the whole period of forty years, we find that the Protestant community has increased more than six-fold, and its comparatively higher character is attested by the fact that, whereas formerly only 1 out of 6 was a Church member, now 1 out of 3 is in that position. If such a rate of progress were continued, the Protestant Church would absorb the whole population of India about the middle of the twenty-first century.

As we examine the progress in detail, however, there is one fact that prevents the prospect being quite so bright,—the apparent rate of progress has

not been maintained during the past nine years.<sup>1</sup> From 1871 to 1881 the increase of the native Protestant community was from 224,000 to 417,000, an increase of 193,000, or 86 per cent., the largest absolute and the largest proportionate increase of any decade. From 1881 to 1890 the increase was 143,000, or about 34 per cent., a less absolute increase than the former decade, and, even making allowance for the shorter time, the least proportionate increase since the census began to be taken. The statistics on this point are not absolutely correct, owing to many of the societies not sending in to the committee charged with compiling them any returns. In such cases the Christian community is calculated at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  for each communicant, which is less than the proportion in other missions. Taking the lowest estimate, these returns show the Protestant community to be increasing at a ratio three times as great as the general population of India, and 60 per cent. greater than other Christians.

And if we look at the returns of Church members, the result is more hopeful. In the first period, from 1871 to 1881, the increase was from 52,816 to 113,325, an average yearly increase of 6051; in the second period, from 1881 to 1890, it had risen to 182,722, an average yearly increase of 7722.

Yet, taking the most favourable view of these

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<sup>1</sup> The last census of Protestant missions in India was taken in 1890, after an interval of nine instead of ten years, to bring it into line with the general census in the beginning of 1891. See Appendix G.

returns, they show, if not a pause, at least a retardation of the progress that had been made before, which calls for earnest examination as to its cause. No doubt, when Christian communities attain the dimensions of some of those in India, there cannot but be much lapsing of adherents,—not possibly into heathenism, but out of Church connection into positions where they are lost sight of. But this does not account for all. Several missions show an absolute decrease—some as much as 30 per cent. In some cases, where inquiry has been made, it has been found that numbers, who had been returned as belonging to the Christian community in 1881, were persons who had been hastily baptized. A prolonged test showed that their profession had been merely nominal, and so they ceased to be reckoned as Christians.

For the past twenty-five or thirty years there have been occasional outcries about the expense of Indian missions and the comparatively small results. Some people seem to think that a mission cannot be a true mission unless the missionaries have to endure personal hardships and discomforts; and that no work is being done unless large numbers of baptisms can be reported. This has led to some cheap missions being attempted, and to baptism being administered with fewer precautions than formerly. But this does not pay in the long run. 'The greater hurry the less speed' is true in spiritual matters as well as worldly matters. The Church in India is now paying the penalty of the hasty action of some of its agents who secured greater

results at the time, that proved ultimately no strength to the Christian cause. It is to be feared that similar methods are still adopted by some missions, and it would be well that these should be carefully considered. Protestant missions in India are in the position of an army that has been pressing forward, but which finds that it has been doing so in too great haste. It has to abandon some positions that are useless, and dismiss some troops that are inefficient, that it may press on with greater vigour to larger conquests. And it is well that in doing so it should look carefully to the principles and spirit in which the fight is to be fought. And we may look for this purpose at the practical question of the principle on which baptism is to be administered.

The simile of an army suggests the Salvation Army; and we may look first of all at its methods, for it differs from other evangelistic agencies in India in not requiring baptism of its converts, or those whom it considers to be converts. It is impossible to look at the Salvation Army and the work it is doing in India without a strange mixture of admiration and regret. In it we see forces, in some respects the strongest ever brought to bear on the evangelisation of India, reduced by wrong method to the weakest of practical results. Its agents, or, as they prefer to term themselves, its officers, show themselves possessed of a whole-hearted consecration, an unhesitating self-denial, a joyful enthusiasm in their work, which exemplify

the highest traditions of Christian devotion and heroism, and ought to make the Army the most successful of all Christianising agencies in India. But all this is neutralised by the want of that prime requisite of success in an army—obedience. They fail in obedience to Jesus Christ, whose commission they seek to fulfil. In giving that commission He appointed the methods, ‘baptize and teach.’<sup>1</sup> The Salvation Army neither baptizes nor teaches. It has been said that Jesus Christ has inspired a great deal, but instituted very little; and just on that account all that He has instituted should be carefully guarded and observed, in the assurance that, unless He had seen it to be essential, He would not have instituted it. And when the methods He instituted for carrying out His great commission are set aside, we need not wonder that success should not be attained.

In England, and indeed in all Christian lands, there was a distinct place for the Salvation Army. There the institutions of Christ remained, but sadly void of the spirit which they were to embody and carry into practical effect. The Army came with a power of the Spirit that exemplified Christian life and practice in a way new to the generation, and that brought life to many dead souls. In England there was the body; it needed to be vivified, and for this work the Salvation Army was well adapted. But in India the body required to be made as well as vivified, and for this the methods of the Army were not adapted. Some of the very methods

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

which they used tended to confuse the issues for the Hindus. Their assumption of the title, and, in some cases, of the dress of fakirs, brought them nearer the natives, but also fostered the idea that there was no fundamental difference between them. They followed the Army in some of its demonstrations without suspecting that they were breaking from their former faith; no definite act was required of them to make them realise this; and so, when the excitement of the moment passed, they were back in their old position. Hence reported 'captures of villages' and other great apparent successes have turned out to be little more than surface movements without permanent results.<sup>1</sup> The Salvation Army, while an example to all other missions in India of Christian devotion and self-renunciation, is also a warning not to abandon the methods which Christ has instituted for others more striking, but less effectual.

Turning now to the ecclesiastical missions, which recognise baptism as a condition of Christian profession, we find considerable difference of practice among them. In some cases it seems to be administered without any more being required of the person receiving it than an expression of willingness to receive it. In other cases the catechumen is required to show not only knowledge of the significance of baptism itself, but also full

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<sup>1</sup> In the statistical tables for 1890 the number connected with the Salvation Army is given as 1920, the authority being Badley's *Missionary Directory*.



acquaintance with the truth, to the teaching of which baptism is supposed to be the introduction. The plea for the former method is that it places those who receive it in the proper position for being taught in the school of Christ, and in such cases there is generally a considerable interval between their being baptized and their being admitted to the Lord's table. The plea for the latter is that it is a better test of the reality of conversion and of the fitness of applicants to be received, and in such cases they are generally at once admitted to the Communion.

If we look at Christ's words in instituting the ordinance, we find that it was closely associated with teaching, and designed for the encouragement of the baptizers and teachers as much as of the baptized and taught. He bade His apostles disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded, and He added the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'<sup>1</sup> There is a covenant between Him and them: they are to teach what He has commanded; He will be with them, to give their teaching a power without which it would fail; and the baptism is the 'seal of the Covenant.' This requires certainly that those who are baptized should be taught. If there is no guarantee that the teaching will be given, no fruit need be expected from the baptism; and in the case of those who have come to mature

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

years there can be no guarantee without the voluntary intelligent assent of those baptized.

The practice of the Apostolic Churches is not obligatory in modern Churches, and few if any follow it entirely. While the apostles evidently baptized all who desired it, some of whom afterwards lapsed,<sup>1</sup> at the same time all who were baptized were seemingly at once admitted to the Lord's table; and in this they are not followed by missions that follow them in the previous respect.

We need not lay too much stress on the spiritual intuition possessed by the apostles, yet there can be little doubt that those whom they baptized clearly understood that they were ranging themselves under the teaching, the discipleship of Christ. The Churches in India should follow their example with intelligent freedom, never losing sight of the obligatoriness of all that the Master instituted, but applying it as experience shows to be most effectual. It may be a matter of Christian prudence to place some interval between the reception of a convert from heathenism into the Church by baptism, and admitting him to the Communion. It may stimulate him to seek a more perfect knowledge of Christian truth. But that should in no way diminish the regard for the Sacrament of initiation. There may not need to be any full acquaintance with Christian truth in those who receive it; but unless there is a clear understanding that they have thereby broken with heathenism and put themselves under Christian teaching, and unless there is provision for that

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 19.

teaching being given, the purpose of Christ in instituting it is tampered with.

And the very exertion made by the individual in taking this position is itself an initiation into the spirit of Christianity. It is said that the Hindu cannot stand alone, and that until there is a mass movement we cannot expect them to come over in great numbers. This may be true, but it must be remembered that individualism is of the very essence of Christianity. A mass movement can be a true Christian movement only when it is a movement of individuals. It is one of the truths which Christianity has to teach the Hindus, that each soul must come into personal relation with God; one of the virtues it has thus to teach them is to stand alone with God, even against all men; and it is well that baptism should make them realise this. Only in so far as it does so can its results be satisfactory. Some of the facts to which I have referred show that baptisms administered without adequate consideration do not tend to secure permanent results, and call for care in admitting to the profession of Christianity.

Turning now from these questions that have been suggested by the recent census, let us look at the attitude which the Church must take to accomplish the work set before it of evangelising India. I do not propose to say anything regarding the methods used. Educational missions and evangelistic missions, medical missions and zenana missions, Bible circulation, tract distribution, and the periodical press,

have all their place. I would speak rather of the spirit in which they must be carried on in face of the insidious enemy they have to encounter.

Twenty years ago I insisted on Intolerance as a primary requisite in the propagation of Christianity in India, and I am now more than ever convinced of its necessity. I purposely use this word, for it is with this that Hindus reproach Christianity, and to it they oppose the large toleration which Hinduism teaches. And if Christianity once becomes tolerant as Hinduism is, it falls vanquished. To the false tolerance of Hinduism it opposes a true intolerance, and to the false intolerance of Hinduism it opposes a true tolerance. To that tolerance which allows as true every form of belief held by others, however much opposed to that held by one's self, which allows conduct to be entirely opposed to conviction, it opposes the intolerance of declaring the consistency of truth, the obligation resting on all to search it out and to maintain consistency between conviction and conduct. To the false intolerance which forbids a man liberty to change his creed, or to alter his profession and practice to carry out new convictions, it opposes the tolerance of allowing—nay, requiring—every man to carry out his belief in practice, provided it does not infringe the foundations of morality.

Gibbon assigns the intolerance of the early Christians as one of the principal causes of the rapid spread of Christianity in the first two centuries. They refused to have Christ admitted as one of the gods of the Roman pantheon, and insisted that He

alone should be worshipped. Had they taken up any more tolerant position than this, the mission of Christianity would have failed; by holding true to it, they overthrew the paganism of the Roman world. And it is only by similar intolerance that Christianity can be successful in India. The position of the Hindus is much more subtle and dangerous than that of the Roman pagan. They do not propose to admit Christ to their pantheon; they say that He is there already, being the same as Vishnu. 'Him whom you worship as Christ we worship as Vishnu; you worship Him after your fashion, we after ours.' And the blinding influence of their system appears in their not being able to see any incongruity between the two. Christ is, according to them, the stream by which Christians reach the ocean of liberation; and Krishna, that by which the Hindus reach it. They acknowledge the moral superiority of Christ; I never had much difficulty in getting Hindus to acknowledge that He was holy and Krishna vile, but I was no nearer convincing them. They would reply, 'A drop of water may reach the ocean in a muddy stream as well as in a pure one.'<sup>1</sup>

Enough has been said to show the extremely subtle and dangerous position which Hinduism takes, and the necessity for Christianity to maintain an uncompromising position with regard to it. While gladly welcoming all the truth that is to be found in Hinduism, there must be no paltering with the great falsehood that taints it—no flinching from

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<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 104.

the old claim put forward for Christ: 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other NAME under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' To maintain this attitude is alike the duty and safety of Christianity, the only ground on which it can hope to triumph. Protestant missions may learn from the paralysis that has come over older missions the fatal consequences of any compromise.

While there are disadvantages in the close connection between the Home and the Indian Churches, and in the dependence of the latter on the former, one unquestionable advantage has been that thereby the firm attitude of Christianity has been preserved. In the earlier Protestant missions caste was recognised, and this might have spread like a cancer among Protestant Churches, had there not come fresh labourers from home who saw with unwarped eye the evil, and insisted on its being uprooted. Though every true friend of Christianity in India must long for the time when the Churches there will be independent and stand on their own footing, it would be disastrous if their bond with the home Churches were severed, before they had acquired the firmness and aggressiveness needful to enable them to withstand and overcome the insidious influence of Hinduism.

But there is a danger that the Churches at home, on whom the burden of the contest must fall for a long time, may be induced to rest content with half victories, which are only final defeats. Christianity has no doubt produced many indirect effects on

Hinduism and the Hindus, which in the absence of more direct effects are dwelt on. We are told of the number of secret disciples, even of 'many hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women who have never been baptized, who yet do not hesitate to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners,' and of the shrewd Brahmans having made this concession to them, 'that they may retain their caste and be excused from the worship of idols, on condition that they refrain from baptism.' This is a good example of how Hinduism shows its toleration. It will tolerate any amount of falsehood and inconsistency if it retains hold of the essential point, the preservation of caste, knowing that from that position it can reconquer all the rest. These instances are an encouragement to press on with all the 'intolerance' which I have tried to show Christianity requires. They show that the work is telling, but if once we concede that persons may be regarded as Christians who refuse baptism and retain caste, we have surrendered to the enemy.

Another form of the fallacy is stated thus, that though we cannot expect to make the Hindus Christian, we may expect to Christianise Hinduism. This, again, is a statement from the Hindu point of view by persons who are unsettled in their own faith, and who cannot altogether break with it. But to accept this position is simply to consent to Christianity being Hinduised. Many of the worst practices sanctioned by Hinduism have indeed been done away with. Sati, thuggism, female



infanticide, and human sacrifice have all been suppressed; but they have been suppressed by the firm action of a Christian Government acting against, instead of along with, public opinion.<sup>1</sup> Gradually public opinion is coming to follow these reforms; and educated Hindus, at all events, are learning to speak with horror of practices once sanctioned by their religion. Idol worship is also seen by them to have no necessary connection with it. Thus, the influence of Christianity on Hinduism has been rather to strengthen its rival by forcing it to abandon certain positions which weakened it, and bringing it more into accordance with natural religion. But Hinduism remains the same. The contest is coming to be between the ultimate principles of the two religions, and these are irreconcilable. Christianity will win the day only as it faithfully proclaims the name of Christ, the embodiment of the two great truths—the Fatherhood of God, with its consequent, the forgiveness of sins, which Hinduism denies; and the Brotherhood of man, with its consequent, the denial of caste, which Hinduism affirms.

While care must be taken that the distinctive position of Christianity be maintained in face of Hinduism, care must also be taken that its true spirit be made manifest. With the present divided

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<sup>1</sup> The latest Act of this kind, the Age of Consent Bill, forbidding husbands to have power over their child-wives until they had come to years of puberty, was carried against the strongest opposition of the Bengal community, whom it chiefly affected, and was ignored by the Indian Congress, which was sitting in Calcutta at the time it was passed.

state of Christendom, and especially of the Protestant section of it, Christianity could hardly avoid coming before India in a divided form. The work of evangelising India is so vast that it calls for the energies of all sections of the Protestant Church. But this diversity may itself become helpful, if it is made the means of showing the essential unity which exists behind it. And up to this time mission comity has on the whole, with one or two exceptions, been well preserved. There is a general disposition to avoid fields occupied by other missions, and where circumstances have led to two or more missions working in the same district they generally co-operate, avoid trenching on one another's field of work, and have periodical meetings together to discuss questions of common interest. At greater intervals there are general conferences, at which the whole work in India is discussed, and general principles of work often agreed on. While, therefore, the evil of the divisions of Christendom are manifest in India, this evil has been reduced to a minimum, and the practical unity of all Christian societies has been very strikingly exhibited. Yet this is an evil. The Hindus speculate about our differences, and the native Christians do not care for them.

Those missions that are ecclesiastically akin are even now seeking to have visible as well as real unity, and to form united Churches, which the various missions, still continuing distinct, may work together to strengthen. Whenever the native Churches can let their voice be heard, they will demand this as speedily as possible.

We must also remember, in considering the future of Christianity in India, what an important factor the English garrison in that country is. It is touching to read some of the treatises written at the dawn of the mission era in India, anticipating how our soldiers and governors and traders might become pioneers of Christian work in that and neighbouring lands, and to think what the record has been, and what a terrible stumbling-block the lives of our countrymen have often been to the natives of these lands. We must remember that for the natives of India, the English in India are the representatives of Christianity, from whose lives they are ready to judge of that religion far more readily than from what they may be taught. All efforts to maintain Christian observances and to foster the Christian spirit among them cannot but tell on the work among the Hindus.<sup>1</sup>

And there is one class which demands the special attention of the Church, that is the Eurasians. They are practically natives of India. By birth, by baptism, by name, and to a certain extent by upbringing, they are Christians. Among them are to be found some capable of taking their places socially and intellectually with the best Europeans—many who maintain Church connection and Christian conduct. But among them are to be found many living in native quarters, all but in name the same as the natives, not above them socially or morally, and yet constituting all the witness which their

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Indian Evangelisation Society is seeking to carry out this work.

neighbours have to the character of Christ and Christianity. A double responsibility is resting on the Church with regard to this class, and yet it is perhaps more neglected than any other in India. If it were faithfully and earnestly evangelised it might come to be a strength to the native Church, a power for the spread of Christianity in India.

But if Christianity is to triumph in India, if that land is to be won for Christ, the Churches of Europe and of America must rise to the work. It is vain to look for adequate results from inadequate means. About one thousand missionaries of all kinds<sup>1</sup> have been sent from the home Churches to evangelise 280 millions of people. What is this but playing at missions? Taking any test—the vastness of the field, the ability of the home Churches, the responsibility of a land being so entirely entrusted to us in providence—the amount of effort put forth is altogether unworthy. When the thousand have been made ten thousand, the Church may talk of adequate effort.

And alike in the history of the past and in the prospects of the future the Church may find abundant encouragement to rise to the further efforts required. The results already achieved are themselves an encouragement. That upwards of half a million should have been gathered in already, in face of the terrible obstacles encountered, and with the means used, is surely a result to encourage greater exertion. They are now there, a basis on which we may work.

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<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of 700 female missionaries.

If caste does forbid the commingling of native Christians with those who still retain the religion of their fathers, they are yet nearer them than are the English, understand them better, and have a better opportunity of commending Christianity to them. The native Christians of India have, no doubt, many defects, yet they are by their lives better exponents of Christianity than many, if not most, of the English in India. Their faults and vices are the faults and vices of their countrymen, and these Christianity does not eradicate in a day. Thus, it may well happen that a Hindu, even after he has professed faith in Christ, and proved his sincerity by passing through the terrible ordeal which that implies, will be found inferior in reliability, truthfulness, and manliness to an Englishman who makes no such profession, but who has from his infancy, by precept, example, and the influence of public opinion, been trained in these virtues. But the Christian faith will ultimately produce a change in his character, and will raise that of the whole community.<sup>1</sup> Already the Indian Church has produced many noble instances of the power of Christianity, and has been adorned by preachers and scholars who show what the Indian intellect may accomplish when it is disciplined by Christianity. As these increase in number, they will more and more take the lead in the work in India, and the fact that such men are being raised is a

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<sup>1</sup> Nothing struck me more, after an absence of twenty years, than the development of character in some of those who had been received into the Church from heathenism shortly before I left.

call to the friends of missions not to relax their efforts.

The progress which female education is making in India is another most hopeful element in the outlook. The women of India have hitherto been the greatest hindrances to the profession of Christianity by the natives of that land. They have been the most ignorant part of the population, the most difficult to reach, the most opposed to change. The problem how to reach them—how to reach the zenanas of the higher castes, and how to gather the daughters of the lower castes into schools—seemed long to baffle all missionary effort. But the education of the young men began to tell on the next generation. They wished to have their daughters taught as well as their sons. Women began to devote themselves systematically to the teaching and evangelisation of women; and the progress made has been marvellous. In 1871, 1300 zenanas were open to the visits of the zenana agents; in 1890 upwards of 40,000 were thus opened. At the former date about 27,000 girls were being taught in schools, and 2000 in zenanas; at the latter date the numbers were 72,000 and 33,000—in all, 105,000 girls receiving Christian instruction. When once the work begins to tell on the women of the country it will tell with double power on the men. The best testimony to the effect that is being produced is seen in the outcry that is being raised by the Hindus themselves, who feel that, now that the zenana has been reached, the stronghold of their religion is menaced with capture.

The state of religious thought in India is another strong encouragement to the Church to press forward. The efforts at reform, which I have sought to delineate, show that old beliefs are losing their hold, that the old system is getting disorganised, is beginning to crumble and to fall. The leaders of thought are looking about to find some hold for the national faith, that may yet be consistent with the progress of enlightenment and the awakening of conscience. But these are being, the one after the other, abandoned. Those principles of human nature which Hinduism has ignored are surely asserting their sway to its overthrow. These principles are consciousness and conscience. The former bears witness to our own personality, the latter to the paramount claims of what is good and true. These two great principles still do exist in the Hindus — antidotes to the subtle pantheistic poison which has for ages been circulating through their national life. These are the auxiliaries to which we have resort in pressing on them the religion of Jesus. In recalling them to their manhood we are calling them to Christianity.

The past religious history of the Hindus, too, points to Christ as its only possible completion. In the history of their very errors we may find encouragement for the future. A dreary history of human darkness has been the search of that great people after God and the truth for three thousand years. Yet let us recognise that it is the truth they have been feeling after. Partial glimpses of it they have had and followed, till they found



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them unsatisfying for man's whole nature ; then they have followed other parts of truth, going from extreme to extreme of religious thought, like a pendulum whose beat is through thousands of years. Impatient of the dead sacerdotalism into which primitive elemental worship and primitive sacrifice had developed, they sought rest first in Buddhism, and then in Hinduism. The former offered them morality without God, and that failed to satisfy them ; the latter offers them God without holiness, incarnations without morality, and this too is failing to satisfy them. Christianity offers them Christ—God and holiness, the perfect incarnation, the desire of the Hindu as of all nations.



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.



### A.

#### BUDDHA'S SYSTEM.

THE teaching of Buddha may be divided into two parts—Doctrinal and Practical. The former is summed up in the Four Great Verities which he discovered under the mimosa tree. These are :—

1st. Suffering exists wherever animated being exists.

2nd. The cause of suffering is desire, *i.e.* a craving for what is only a temporary illusion.

3rd. Deliverance from suffering can be effected only by deliverance from desire, or by attaining Nirvana.

4th. Nirvana can be attained only by following the method of Buddha.

The method included in the Fourth Verity consists of eight paths leading to Nirvana. Of these the first four applicable to all are—1st, right vision or faith (*cf.* Matt. vi. 22); 2nd, right judgment or thoughts; 3rd, right language; 4th, right actions. This is a simple enough statement, that Buddha's disciples must have the right faith, and seek to be perfect in thought, word, and deed. The remaining four paths are applicable especially to the priesthood, and show the influence of his false conception of man's end, or Nirvana. They are—5th, right means of livelihood, or the profession of a recluse; 6th, right application of the spirit to the study of the law; 7th, right memory, or freedom from error in recollecting the law; 8th, right meditation, which

conducts the intelligence to a quietude nearly approaching Nirvana.

The Practical part of his system has the same double aspect, both in its negative and positive injunctions. The negative part has five commandments binding on all—*1st*, not to kill—extending even to animal life ; *2nd*, not to steal ; *3rd*, not to commit adultery ; *4th*, not to lie—this extends to the using of improper language ; *5th*, not to use strong drink ; and five binding specially on priests—*1st*, not to take repasts at improper times ; *2nd*, not to look at dances and plays ; *3rd*, not to have costly raiments, perfumes, etc. ; *4th*, not to have a large bed or quilt ; *5th*, not to receive gold or silver.

The positive part of the moral law consists in enjoining six virtues on all—charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation, science. Of these the first—charity—is the most important, and includes caring not only for man, but also for all animate beings down to the smallest insect. Twelve observances are further enjoined on recluses—*1st*, to use clothes made only of rags picked up in burying-grounds or on the road ; *2nd*, to have only three such coats all sewn by the wearer's hands ; *3rd*, to have a cloak of yellow wool to cover all, prepared in the same way ; *4th*, to live only on food given in charity and without asking ; *5th*, to take only one meal daily ; *6th*, never to eat or drink after mid-day ; *7th*, to live in the forests or jungles ; *8th*, to have no roof but the foliage of the trees ; *9th*, to sit with the back supported by the trunk of the tree ; *10th*, to sleep sitting and not lying ; *11th*, never to change the position of the carpet or quilt when it has once been spread ; *12th*, to go once a month to burying or burning grounds to meditate on the vanity of earth. These are rules which Buddha is said to have followed himself, and which are enjoined on his disciples.

It will be observed that throughout this teaching there is a complete distinction, if not antagonism, between the religion for the masses and the discipline for the priesthood. The former is intelligible and human, and a clear expression of the moral law as regards human relationship, though defective as ignoring the filial relationship. The latter is a cold-hearted, unnatural endeavour to attain a selfish end.

## B.

NOTE, p. 70.

## SCHOOLS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

There are said to be six schools or *Darshan* of Hindu Philosophy, but they are arranged also in three pairs according to the views they support.

I. The Sensational School included—1st, the Nyaya or Logic, said to be founded by Gautama. He taught the method of reasoning which has been adopted by all the schools, whence the name of his school. He considered Sensation to be the origin of our knowledge, and set himself to investigate it. He started the idea of *Adrishta* the unseen, to account for what cannot be accounted for otherwise.

2nd. The Atomic School, said to be founded by Kanada, is connected with the Nyaya. But he supplemented it by investigating the objects of sensation, and introduced the idea of atoms as the material cause of the universe.

II. The second pair included, 1st, The Sankhya or numeral system, said to be founded by Kapila. It starts with the object of our perceptions and sensations, and may therefore be considered materialistic. It teaches the eternity of matter. God could not create the universe without desire and consequent want of power. If He had desire He could not have power, and if He had power He could not have desire. According to him, Prakriti,—which corresponds very much with matter, as explained by the most advanced school of modern materialists,—the rootless root, is the eternal cause of all things, and contains within itself 'the promise and potency' of every form of existence. It is inanimate, non-sentient, and prolific. Beside it is Purusha, the soul, intelligent, sentient, and non-productive, because free and indifferent.

2nd. The Yoga or mystic system, founded by Patanjali: adopted the above system, but introduced the idea of God, and dwelt more on how the soul is to be freed from bondage to Prakriti.



III. The third pair included, 1st, the Purva Mimansa,—original decider,—founded by Jaimini, which sought to bring back the Brahmans to the Vedas as the source of authority. It has but one distinctive tenet, the eternity of the Vedas, or, as he puts it, the eternity of word or sound (Sabda).

2nd. The Uttara Mimansa,—second decider,—said to be founded by Vyasa. It appeals to the Veda, too, as decider ; but attaches itself to the concluding part of it, the Upanishads (see *ante*, p. 46), and hence is commonly called the Vedanta. It seeks to answer the question what is and what is not, and answers Brahma, God alone is, everything else is not. One section, acknowledging the reality of the visible universe, identifies it with God ; another, the more general, denies the reality of the visible world, and calls it Maya, or illusion. This is now the most influential school, and the study of the others is supposed to be incomplete without a knowledge of it.

With all the schools two axioms are accepted—*ex nihilo nihil fit*, nothing from nothing ; and the transmigration of the soul. Their object is to explain the existence of the world and the circumstances of human life in conformity with these axioms. The authors of the various schools are given here as generally accepted by the Hindus, but there is doubt whether they are real or mythical characters. There is also considerable doubt as to the date of the rise of the various schools. Some make the older ones anterior to Buddhism, but Bannerjea, whom I have followed, advances strong reasons for considering them all subsequent to the rise of that religion, and designed to combat it.

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## C.

NOTE, p. 79.

## HINDU LOGIC.

The form of the Hindu syllogism goes far to illustrate the Hindu mode of reasoning. It consists of five parts :—

- |      |                                         |                                                              |
|------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st. | The Proposition ( <i>pratagya</i> ) as: | The mountain is fiery.                                       |
| 2nd. | The Reason ( <i>hetu</i> ),             | Because it gives forth<br>smoke ;                            |
| 3rd. | The Example ( <i>Udaharna</i> ),        | For whatever is smoky<br>is fiery, as a culinary<br>hearth ; |
| 4th. | The Application ( <i>Upanaya</i> ),     | But so is this mountain<br>smoky ;                           |
| 5th. | The Conclusion ( <i>Nigaman</i> ),      | Therefore it is fiery.                                       |

The last three members of this syllogism correspond very much with the Aristotelian, and either the first two or last two seem superfluous. The advocates of Hindu Logic defend it on the ground that it is rhetorical rather than philosophical, designed to convince an adversary, to display a truth already discovered rather than to investigate the truth itself. But this is its great vice. There is no canon for the investigation or discovery of truth. It is obvious that its weakness lies in the third member, the example. If this were always made a true induction or a carefully tested example, it would be legitimate. But it admits of a simple instance establishing a universal conclusion, or the most distant analogy being taken for an instance in point. This is the defect of the syllogism, and it is the defect of all Hindu reasoning. I once asked a pundit to state logically his argument that man's spirit was sinless, which he did as follows :—

‘ Man's spirit is sinless,  
Because it is distinct from the sin which man commits ;  
For all things are distinct from that which they contain, as

the water of a muddy stream is distinct from the mud which it contains ;

But so is the spirit of man distinct from the sin which it may be said to contain ;

Therefore it is sinless.'

This was an attempt to put into a logical form the stock argument used by the Hindus—Spirit is free from sin as water is distinct from all the dirt which may be mingled with it.

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D.

NOTE, p. 162.

### MOHAMMEDAN DOCTRINE OF SIN.

The following extracts from the Mohammedan Commentary on the Holy Bible by Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan, will show the Mohammedan view of sin and its origin :—

‘When God created man and gave him life, he was like other animals wholly void of discernment—he had not the power of knowing good and evil. Only in so far as God showed him, did he know anything. For this reason he was without vexation, he was wholly guiltless, and he had no fear of any kind of death, for what he did at that time, he did not with his own understanding. God revealed to him the power of knowing good and evil, and warned him not to take it, for, if he did, he would die a certain kind of death, namely, he would fall into this severe calamity, that he would be responsible for his own deeds, would have himself to distinguish between every action as right or wrong, and, as he would receive the reward of his good deeds, would receive also the punishment of evil deeds. Man did not heed this warning of God, and acquired a knowledge of good and evil, by reason of which we are now responsible for our actions, are involved in evil deeds, and receive the reward of our good deeds. Thus it may be said that this is the prime cause of the coming of evil to man.’—Part II. p. 158.

‘Christian divines have made it a basis of their faith that, by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin has passed upon all men, and therefore all men are guilty. If their sin was pardoned without any punishment, that would be opposed to justice, and if every one had to bear all his own punishment, that would be opposed to mercy. Therefore God gave the promise of a coming Saviour, namely, Jesus Christ, who is God Himself, but who became incarnate in the form of Christ, who was the seed of the woman, not of the man. . . . But we Mohammedans do not consider this disobedience of Adam and Eve to have been the beginning of sin, nor do we look on this event as bringing guilt on the human race. We believe this event to have been the cause of the knowledge of good and evil for mankind, by reason of which they have not remained void of responsibility like other creatures. If, therefore, any one will walk according to the guidance of God, he shall obtain salvation ; and if any one will act in a way opposed to it, he shall be punished.’—Part II. pp. 182, 183.

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E.

NOTE, p. 185.

NATURAL RELIGION IN HINDU LITERATURE.

Besides one or two extracts that have already been given, I subjoin the following specimens of high moral and religious sentiments taken from Hindu poets.

The following, found in the Hitopadesa, is translated by Sir Edwin Arnold :—

‘*Take no thought for your life*’ (Matt. vi. 23–30).

‘For thy bread be not o’er thoughtful, God for all hath taken thought ;  
When the babe is born, the milk too to the mother’s breast is brought ;

He who gave the swan his silver, and the hawk his plumes of pride,  
And his purple to the peacock—He will verily provide.'

The following is a translation of a Tamil hymn by Mr. Cardwell :—

'*All Thy works praise Thee*' (compare Ps. cxlvii.).

'Whilst Thee, with tongues of splendour, the orbs of heaven  
praise ;

Whilst gems to Thee their voices, with tongues of brilliance,  
raise ;

Whilst unto Thee wood-warblers, with tongues of joyance,  
sing ;

Whilst wood-flowers Thy sweet praises from tongues of fra-  
grance fling ;

Whilst Thee, with tongues of clearness, the water-floods  
applaud :

Thus, day by day, from all things dost Thou receive not laud ?

Wilt Thou not deign to suffer the tongue Thou gavest me—

Though I be dumb and thoughtless—to offer praise to Thee ?'

The following are translated from various Indian writers  
by Dr. John Muir :—

'*Why beholdest thou the mote which is in thy brother's eye ?*' etc.

'Thou mark'st the faults of other men,

Although as mustard seeds minute ;

Thine own escape thy partial ken,

Though each in size a Bilva fruit.'

*No second youth for Man* (compare Job xiv. 7).

'The empty beds of rivers fill again,

Trees, leafless now, renew their vernal bloom,

Returning moons their lustrous phase resume,

But man a second youth expects in vain.'

*The lapse of Time not practically noticed.*

'Again the morn returns, again the night ;

Again the sun, the moon, ascends the sky ;

Our lives still waste away as seasons fly,

But who his final welfare keeps in sight ?'

## F.

NOTE, p. 222.

## THE ARYA SAMAJ.

‘The teaching of Dayanand Saraswati, like that of other Hindu guides, covers the whole breadth of human life and human nature, physical, social, and religious, from birth to death ; from the learning of the alphabet up to grammar and logic, and the acquisition of divine knowledge ; from the washing of hands to the offering of burnt-incense, and the contemplation of the Deity. It is a strange mixture of the ancient and the modern, of Eastern and Western notions, of Hindu cosmogony and modern science, of antiquated and impracticable theories and silly and trifling precepts. I can only touch upon a few points to show the nature of the teaching, and what may be expected if the Arya Samaj should acquire the influence it aims at.

‘Passing over the ceremonies connected with birth and infancy, we find ample and curious, as well as utterly impracticable, instructions regarding education. Dayanand goes in for compulsory education for both boys and girls. No child must be allowed to remain at home after eight years of age ; they must all be sent to boarding-schools. The boys’ and girls’ school must be four miles apart, and no school must be within eight miles of a town or village ! There must be no coming and going, and no correspondence whatever between parents and children. Boys must remain at school studying the Veda for at least sixteen and the girls for at least eight years.

‘The present system of caste is denounced as a human invention, but four classes (*varn*) are recognised as having Vedic authority—the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. These should not be regarded as hereditary, but at the age of twenty-five in the case of a man, and of sixteen in the case of a woman, before leaving school, they should be subjected to an examination, and their class determined accordingly.

If members of the same family should happen to come out in different classes, the Shudra could not thereafter eat with his brothers of the higher grades. And if parents should lose their only son by his falling into a lower rank than themselves, Dayanand consoles them with the thought that some other youth, of their own class, would be assigned to them in place of their son.

‘As to marriage, in no case must it take place before twenty-five in the case of a man and sixteen in the case of the woman ; but for the highest and most honourable marriage the man must be forty-eight and the woman twenty-four years of age. The marriage arrangements must be made with the consent of the parties chiefly concerned. Photographs of young women of the marriageable age should be sent to the young men’s colleges, and of young men of twenty-five or upwards to the ladies’ college ; and with the photos there should be a full description of the young men and women, and of their character and attainments, and so they should make their choice and have the marriage at the time of leaving school. Other Hindus are slow to admit the marriage of widows, but the Arya Samaj allows no second marriage in the case of either males or females. The crying need of India is the re-marriage of widows—Dayanand would put widowers and widows on the same footing, not by enfranchising widows, but by subjecting widowers to the same restriction.’—Rev. James Gray, in *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, Dec. 1889.

The above account of the teaching of Dayanand Saraswati, by one who is perhaps better qualified for speaking of it than any other, shows that the Arya Samaj has accepted its founder’s systems with considerable modifications. The impracticable part of the teaching has been allowed to drop. The spirit of finding a warrant for all Hindu reform exclusively in the ancient Scriptures of India—interpreted, allegorised, or rationalised—seems the main result of his work.

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G.

NOTE, p. 236.

## STATISTICS OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS.

	Foreign Ordained Agents.	Native Ordained Agents.	Foreign and Eurasian Lay Preachers.	Native Lay Preachers.	Churches and Congregations.	Native Christians.	Communicants.
1851,	339	21	...	493	267	91,092	14,661
1861,	479	97	...	1266	971	138,731	24,976
1871,	488	225	...	1985	2278	224,258	52,816
1881,	586	461	72	2488	3650	417,372	113,325
1890,	857	797	118	3491	4863	559,661	182,722



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## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON THE FIRST EDITION—continued.

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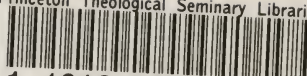
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